THOMAS BROTHERHOOD OF MOUNT SHASTA TRANQUILITY TWELVE

Brotherhood of Mt. Shasta

By

Eugene E. Thomas

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Eugene E. Thomas

Tranquility Twelve
Santa Monica, Calif.

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Publisher's Note

It seems as though today, many are making their journey from what was, into what is; always holding on to what will come as a direction toward what will be (never observing their compass to be the measure of their capacity of *our* understanding). As with any compass, it gives reference to an azimuth from a point of here now. Looking always for a north to be south from, the search for self continues. Yet where else in this game of hide and seek could a clever self hide other than inside? The tongue is indeed a tool through which the cunning nature manifests itself. Here, far from the ears of the heart, speaks the master of the house; more often than not, overlooking that every household-master must have a "house" to be master of, and to that degree is subservient to his own structural creation. This is a matter to ponder upon; for it is thought itself that dwells within the house and mumbles with tongue in cheek, just one of many pieces of furniture placed by the decorator within the confines of a comfortable dwelling.

However, it is for us to remember that an abode is no greater than its foundation and a teacher no better than his school. Seek therefore a direction wherein the school becomes the abode for the teacher — creating a foundation of truth for the student living therein.

Tranquility Twelve

Brotherhood of Mount Shasta

by Eugene E. Thomas

Brotherhood of Mount Shasta is a strange and exciting novel which leads the reader through a succession of extraordinary adventures . . . adventures not confined to the physical, but bravely storming the realms of mind and spirit.

The story of Donald Crane and his search for a mystic Brotherhood and spiritual wisdom has its setting in the mysterious inner recesses of Mount Shasta, where Crane attains sufficient soul development to receive initiation into the secret rituals of the ancient order he seeks. Subsequently, his own previous incarnations are revealed to him in a colorful panorama of intriguing episodes which challenge the imagination and excite the interest in the philosophy of reincarnation.

Brotherhood of Mount Shasta will bear deep and significant implications to its readers. We predict that even the skeptic may be induced to wonder . . . to ponder and to think.

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Brotherhood of Mt. Shasta

CHAPTER I

From Clouds to Sunshine

WHEN ONE has basked in the sunshine of a milder climate for many years, then makes an unexpected call to the far-famed land of the Golden Gate during that period when winter is about to bid adieu and spring is making intermittent efforts to announce its coming, there will be days, if one stays long enough to endure the temperamental moods of the season, when time will hang heavily and the hours will seem of unusual length.

San Francisco's dreary aspect certainly was not inviting to Donald Crane. He had formed a more congenial picture of the most wonderful of American harbors. Of course he knew the time of the year was to blame. He could not but recall with regrets his journeys through South and Central America, the all too short stay at Honolulu, and leisurely trip up the west coast of Mexico.

Here the morning fogs that turned to heavy rain, the dismal and monotonous sound of fog horns, the blasts of ferry-boat whistles and the tolling of numerous bells made up a melody for which one must cultivate a taste

in order to enjoy it. And Crane had not yet cultivated such a taste. He found it hard to comprehend how these people took their wretched weather as a matter of course. He knew there would come fogless mornings and many days of joyous sunshine. But this realization did not make this particular morning any more pleasant.

He had ventured out of his apartment only for breakfast; he had clung to the walls along the sidewalks in order to escape a drenching from sudden showers. Now he sat and listened to the monotony of sounds with a restlessness and a boredom he had not known for years. He had traveled much, had read much, but he had never found that for which he was always seeking. What was the reality for which he sought? He did not know. But, whatever it was, it had so far successfully eluded him.

It was in Honolulu he had read a book that had been written in Australia. Because of what he had found in the book, he was now in San Francisco. It was a strange book. It dealt with such mysteries as were calculated to fire the very soul of him who thirsted for secret knowledge at all costs. The book was couched in such language as made the attainment of this hidden wisdom logical and feasible. Two paragraphs in particular had been sufficient to induce Donald Crane to embark on a strange quest.

"Australia is what remains of a vast continent which existed so far back in the history of the world that men now seldom dare speak of it; and, if they do speak of it, most of what they say is theory and conjecture. Only those whose souls are able to lift the curtain of the past

can really tell anything authentic about that mysterious land. When you have been sufficiently instructed, and have diligently striven to carry out the instructions received, go to the western coast of the American continent, to an extinct volcano whose name is Shasta. If your preparation be sufficient, your sincerity unquestionable, an ancient Brotherhood will be found that will guide you to the place where you may be further instructed.

"But bear in mind others before you have sought this Brotherhood and have not found it. If it should be your lot to seek it, be prepared to endure with patience a tiresome search and tests of strength that will prove or disprove your worthiness. And remember, it is the unattainable that is most desirable."

The average individual probably would find little incentive in these two paragraphs. They would be interesting, of course, but the second paragraph contained words which would cause one or the other of two impressions. The one, that the search for the Brotherhood might result in much useless expenditure of time and effort; the other, that the author found in the explanation a sufficient answer for those who might be silly enough to seek for something which, in all probability, was but a figment of someone's imagination.

But there do exist a few individuals who are credulous enough to believe in unordinary phenomena, especially if they occur at psychological moments; and, despite the efforts of others to dislodge their beliefs, they will cling to their convictions.

Various philosophies had captured Crane's interest, and he had earnestly pondered over them. But that higher knowledge he sought seemed ever to evade him. He believed he now knew enough to be permitted to enter into that elusive realm of wisdom.

Still young, he wished to make the most of the many years he felt lay ahead of him. He had no need to strive for money because he had plenty. "Others have sought . . . and have not found it." He interpreted these words as a challenge. If it could be found, he would find it. This was both a determination and a belief.

No sooner had he finished reading the book than he called up a steamship company for a reservation. A boat was just leaving. This did not strike him as unusual at the time. But he was to learn nothing "just happens", that there are no accidents in the scheme of life.

This rain-soaked morning in San Francisco filled him with a terrible restlessness and a desire to be in a more gracious clime. But he had not the slightest intention of abandoning his quest. "Be prepared to endure with patience a tiresome search . . ." These words kept repeating themselves in his mind. Was this a challenge to his strength? If this was a part of his testing, he would show what strength he possessed. Let the elements do their worst. Let those infernal fog horns and bells keep up their bedlam. It could not last forever. Anyway, his own anxiety to be on the ground by the time spring arrived had brought him here earlier than was necessary. Supposing he had arrived later? It was likely something else would have occurred to equally challenge his powers.

Moments came when he thought he would go mad. Then a walk through the ferry or an hour or so spent at a theater would enable him to temporarily forget his restlessness. But the weather finally ceased its tearful demonstrations, and he was told he could now, without much danger from rains or storms, go out into the country. He had known, of course, that to go during the cold, rainy season to the vicinity of Mount Shasta would be sheer folly.

While waiting in San Francisco, he made subtle inquiries as to any out-of-the-ordinary inhabitants who might be in Shasta county. But, with one exception, he gleaned nothing. The one exception was a fragment obtained from a mining engineer who in a casual conversation revealed a familiarity with the vicinity.

When approached relative to the subject of strange inhabitants, the engineer looked sharply at his interrogator. After a momentary hestitation he replied:

"Well, I've heard tales of strange people. Nobody, as far as I know, has been able to trace these tales to anything tangible. I've been told certain peculiar individuals have gone out with the express purpose of locating them. I've never heard of anything coming from the search."

With obvious reluctance, due, Donald thought, to the fantastic nature of the legend, the engineer stated there was a far-fetched story someone had told, no one seemed to know who, to the effect that on different occasions a strange individual had come into the city of San Francisco for the purpose of making certain purchases. It was said the man always paid with pure gold nuggets;

and it seemed someone had claimed he was from a people who lived somewhere in the mountains, in a place hidden from general observation; and it was said these people were descendants from a lost continent that lay somewhere in the Pacific ocean. From what authority these statements came, or who originated them, no one knew.

"The whole story, I don't doubt, grew out of an exaggerated report of some unusual incident." The mining engineer thus concluded his narration and again rather sharply scrutinized the questioner.

Crane told no one of his intentions. To those who evinced a desire to know his business, he hinted that he was interested in mining. As he had derived most of his fortune from that industry, he was giving a partial truth.

He purchased a car, bought suitable bedding and provisions to last him a month and started out for the mountains.

The scenery along the way entranced him. Great mountains and low valleys, green with the verdure of spring, greeted him on all sides. He did go through some very barren hills, made so, he was told, by the fumes of a smelter some miles away. It was astonishing how much territory had been made bare by these destructive fumes.

He could not resist the temptation to get out and watch for an hour or more the rushing together of mighty waters at the point where the beautiful Sacramento river and the Pitt river joined each other on their way to the sea. Some of the residents had told him of this union, and that what is known as the Sacramento river should have been named Pitt, as the Pitt is the larger, and hence,

instead of the Pitt flowing into the Sacramento, it is the Sacramento that pours into the Pitt.

Further along the way he found another junction that impressed him almost as much as the first; the union of the McCloud river with the Pitt. The scenery as he went on became more beautiful. Near the top of a high mountain he stopped to watch an always fascinating sight to him—a passenger train winding its way around curves, crossing bridges, and crawling into the mountain to plow through the darkness of long tunnels—much like a huge serpent. In the distance he could see the white peak of Mount Shasta, the sight of which never failed to make his heart beat faster.

At last he went through the abandoned town of Shasta. Old houses that had fallen, foundations from which dwellings had long since disappeared, and fences that had rotted down, made it almost impossible to conceive that a thriving mining town once had occupied this spot. What tales those ruined shacks might tell could they but speak!

Arriving at a place where further travel by automobile was impossible, he improvised a shelter for the car; then, taking a blanket, some food, and a few things he thought might be needed, he started out on foot. He encountered wonderful cascades and waterfalls. Every step of the way he found new beauties to admire. Near the foot of Mount Shasta he gazed delightedly at a miniature lake, formed by the icy waters of a spring. It was set in its place like a gem of dazzling radiance, and surrounding it was the greenest verdure he had ever seen.

He had been told of the springs that abounded in the vicinity, and of the vistas that would open before him, but no one, he thought, could adequately depict with words this gem of the Shasta mountains. It all impressed him as being beyond description. He felt, even if he failed in his quest, he was already amply repaid for having taken the trip. He was later to realize, had he read all that had been written about this picturesque country, he could never, without having seen it, have gained a true conception of its majesty and beauty.

He was glad he was alone. The silence affected him in a way that vastly enhanced his enjoyment of the experience.

That night his blanket served both for bed to lie upon and covering; his arm was his pillow. Not since he had left the mines had he slept in this manner. The next morning he arose, not stiff nor sore, as he expected to be, but refreshed and vigorous, and ready for whatever might be in store for him. Some delicious watercress which he had found on the edge of the spring, supplemented his breakfast of canned goods. After satisfying his healthy appetite, he was again on his way.

Donald's mind was now calm and reposeful. He was even happy. Besides, he had a feeling of expectancy, as if he were about to experience something interesting and pleasant. Long ago explorers, when they were invading new and hitherto unknown worlds, he imagined, must have felt such a sense of eager anticipation.

The territory over which his way took him was the most difficult and uneven he had seen in a long while.

Yet he found himself able to walk for hours without any sense of fatigue. When he sat down, it was less to rest than to enjoy the stillness. What a sense of peace it brought to him! No longer was he driven by an impatient desire to find the things in search of which he had come here. His finding of them would take care of itself. For the present he would enjoy all Mother Nature had to show him.

A faint laugh came to his ears. This aroused him from his meditation upon the peace and calm of his surroundings. He looked about him and saw no one. Nor could he at the time conceive of how anyone could be near enough to be heard and not seen. Was the silence working on his imagination? He seemed to be growing different in many ways. Well, why worry about it? If he were going to have hallucinations, they might prove interesting; especially if the hallucinations were pleasant ones. And the laugh he had fancied he had heard was decidedly not discordant.

Just as he arose to resume his journey, the happy, silvery laughter of a young girl came again, seemingly from a distance. Instantly he started in the direction from which the sound had seemed to come. While he still could see no one, the voice which had aroused his attention, as he proceeded, became more audible.

Suddenly Donald found himself on the rim of what appeared to have once been a vast crater, but which was now a beautiful little valley. So green with verdure was this valley, it gave rise to the impression that no bleakness of winter could ever have touched it.

Near the lava-formed rim a young girl was struggling with a playful antelope. She was trying to induce the animal to go back with her to the valley below. But the antelope was plainly intent on climbing entirely out of the valley. The creature broke away with a bound, and made directly toward the point where Crane stood.

The girl looked up, and an expression of amazement transformed her face. The sight of a man standing there, Donald could see, astonished her. Her look of astonishment grew when the antelope leaped gracefully to Donald's side, and placed its muzzle confidently in his hand.

The instant the antelope's muzzle touched his hand, Crane felt the same thrill he had experienced when he had read the book from Australia. He looked down into the creature's soft eyes, and saw in them a revelation of perfect trust and of undying affection. Never had he heard words uttered that more completely conveyed a message. Those intelligent eyes gave forth a message of welcome. In times past, the expression in the eyes of a loyal, loving dog had brought tears to his own eyes. He sensed something beyond that in this antelope's greeting. Between himself, who was of the human kingdom, and this antelope, which was of the animal kingdom, there seemed to exist an extraordinary understanding.

The graceful animal turned and walked toward the girl. Occasionally it looked back, as if it expected the man to follow. Whenever Crane was left a little distance behind, the antelope waited until the distance between them was diminished. Then it ambled ahead. Thus they

proceeded until they stood before the girl, who awaited them.

Crane took off his hat and bowed. "I hope I am not intruding", he gestured toward the antelope, "but our mutual friend seems to have taken it upon himself to lead me here."

"So—you have come."

He imagined her voice had in it something akin to awe.

"Yes, I am here. But I do not understand. You speak as if I were expected. May I introduce myself? I am Donald Crane. I have been looking over these mountains, and enjoying some of your beautiful scenery. I must admit I had no idea such a marvel as your delightful valley existed. I have seen wonderful sights in the vicinity, but nothing comparable to this." And he looked appreciatively into the green valley below.

"You have been expected. I did not know it was to be thus, nor so soon."

Again he detected in her tone a quality that could but denote awe. Yet he sensed it was not awe of him, but of something in connection with his coming.

She was exquisitely beautiful. Her eyes were dark brown in color; her hair almost jet black. Her age, he judged, was seventeen or eighteen years. She was dressed in a gown of pure white; and the outer garment was of a filmy material. Her garments, thought Donald, caused the wearer to appear to be an ethereal being, escaped from an enchanted castle, rather than a human girl of ordinary conditions and surroundings.

"Will you please explain?" he urged. "How is it that you expected my coming?"

"Are you not he who read the message in the book, and who has come to seek the Brotherhood?"

Once again he felt the thrill that was like an electric shock—the thrill that had come to him when he read the book, also when he felt the antelope's muzzle in his hand. So, after all, he was about to find the Brotherhood. Somehow he had never entertained a doubt about it.

"Come," said the girl, "let us go down, and inform the Council that you are here."

Obediently, unquestioningly, he followed. Mentally he commented on the peculiar sweetness of her voice. It was made all the sweeter by an accent that indicated an environment different from the surroundings to which he was accustomed.

Until they reached the floor of the valley, it was necessary for them to walk in single file. Now they could walk side by side, and they found it easier to converse.

"Now that we are down," he said, "can you not tell me something of that which I wish to know?"

"Be patient," she replied. "I am escorting you to the Council where all will be explained."

CHAPTER II

Finding the Brotherhood

Crane thought he never had seen more beautiful gardens than those he now viewed. There seemed not to be any farms, but orchards. Later he learned no vegetables were produced in these gardens. Only flowers grew in them, and beauty was the purpose of their cultivation. Also, he was to learn, no flower was ever plucked. Hence, flower vases were unknown here, though flower pots, in which plants grew and blossomed, were plentiful.

Apparently there were few houses. From this he concluded there could not be many inhabitants. He began to speculate. Given a certain number of people in a beautiful place such as this, in the course of time there would naturally be an increase. In some way that must be taken care of. What became of this increase?

His lovely escort, at this point in his ruminations, touched his arm.

"This is the place," she said.

A door opened and they entered a large room. This room was behind a high wall that served partly as a fence, also as the back part of the chamber. In the front part of the chamber shone a glittering symbol of the sun. On each side were other symbols, and under each symbol stood a great chair. The impression would be that

they were intended as stations in a lodge room. Several men, dressed in flowing white robes, sat at a large table in the center of the room.

To Crane this indicated some kind of a session was being held.

The white-robed men, when Crane and the girl made their entrance, arose and looked questioningly at the girl.

"It is he whom you have been expecting," she announced.

"And how do you know this?" was the query.

"By the sign the antelope gave," was her reply.

"And how was the sign given, that it could not be mistaken?"

"By the eagerness of the approach, and the laying of the muzzle in the hand."

" 'Tis well."

The interrogator—evidently the chief or presiding official of the gathering—turned his penetrating look toward Crane.

"Donald Crane, you have been expected. We bid you welcome. Your search for the Brotherhood has been rewarded. The questions and answers you have heard are merely ritualistic, though an important part of your reception here. Please be seated."

Again Donald detected, in the manner of his hosts, the awe which seemed somehow to be connected with his advent.

He seated himself in the chair toward which the presiding official had gestured. With avid interest he listened

to a few remarks which were uttered by the assembled Brothers.

The meeting was then adjourned, with the understanding that in the evening another meeting would be held for the purpose of formally receiving Crane into the Brotherhood.

"It is with great reverence and awe, my brother, that we see the fulfillment of the law," said the speaker of the occasion. "It has been known for some time that you were ready to become a member of the Brotherhood. It was by, or through, our work that the book was written which inspired you to come to us. It was through our work that you were enabled to find the place. In fact, you were thus led here. It was through vibrations sent to you that you became so anxiously desirous of finding the Brotherhood."

"But it was so easy to find," replied Crane. "Of course," he added, "had I not heard the young lady's laughter, I should have passed by the place. Still, had I happened to walk a short distance nearer, I could not have missed it."

The elder man smiled. "My brother, this place has never been seen except by those who should see it. Many have looked for it; they knew it existed. Because they were not yet prepared to enter here, they failed to find it. Others have seen it—but, if they returned to their former haunts, never afterward did they speak of having seen it."

"Is there some means of preventing a person from

seeing so large a place?" queried Crane. "Suppose, for instance, he were to pass over it in an aeroplane?"

"Many planes have flown over it. Though the pilots looked directly at the valley, they saw nothing to distinguish it from the surroundings. Thus will it ever be, except to those Souls who are welcome here."

"Strange! Please pardon my inquisitiveness. There may be many things to which my mind must become accustomed." The young man spoke with quiet earnestness. "You already know all about me. I have perceived that. You know I have studied along esoteric lines, that I am in a measure prepared for unusual phenomena or experiences. But there is much I do not know, and I desire to know these things which have so far eluded me. I fear I possess too much curiosity. My real desire, though, is to acquire such knowledge as may be helpful both to myself and to other individuals with whom I may come in contact."

"That is well. The purpose of your quest is sufficient. As for the curiosity, there must always be that element if one would have the desire to know. But yours is the proper kind of curiosity; yours is not the idle curiosity that leads men on to the accomplishment of only selfish ends."

"Something about this chamber makes me feel a reverence, such as I have never felt elsewhere," said Donald. "It is as though the vibrations in and about it were charged with ineffable holiness and sacredness. Is there a special reason for this?"

"The reasons are many. This is all holy ground."

The white-robed Brother spoke with gentle serenity. "That is one of the reasons why unholy persons are kept away from this spot. For us who are here there is a work to be done, and we could not do it were conditions in this regard different. But I must now turn you over to Nona. She will guide you about, and explain such things as you would like to know."

Crane bowed to the waiting girl, then passed out with her. He thought no guide more to his liking could have been given him. But something forbade his telling her this.

They went out into the sunlight, where Crane viewed with renewed interest the colorful flower gardens. It occurred to him to ask where the vegetables were planted.

"We do not eat them. Our food consists of ripened fruits. As you see—" She indicated the orchards. "We have a sufficiently great variety to supply us with all the elements found in other foods; and there is an additional quality which is needful for us here."

"What is that quality, may I ask?"

"It is difficult to describe in words," replied the girl. "But when one subsists entirely on fruits, the mind becomes more alert. Then the inner faculties become highly developed, and the whole being responds more readily to the Cosmic forces."

"I have noticed that you and the others whom I have heard speak have unusually melodious voices. Does living exclusively on fruits have a tendency to affect the voice in this respect? I have read such is the case."

"Yes. But the improvement in the voice is only incidental. That is but one of the many ways in which the personality, as a whole, improves. The entire physical body is made less dense; in other words, the vibrations of the physical are raised to a much higher rate; and the physical is in this way caused to become more in tune with the non-physical."

"Ah, I have noticed an air of peace and calm here. On rare occasions only, when I was alone, have I sensed this feeling in any other place. I suppose this is due to your methods of living?"

"Yes, it is due to our methods of living." She paused, and her manner became more grave. "Much more than the mere matter of diet, however, is involved, as you no doubt are aware."

"Well, I could hardly conceive that the powers you people seem to possess, such as knowing about the book I had read, and that I was coming—nor, of course, the other knowledge you have—could come from only your habits of diet. Yet I am now prepared to believe it is a strong factor."

"True. And you will receive instructions in the other matters later." For a moment she was silent, then continued in her low, musical voice. "We know you have thought much; that you have earnestly concentrated and meditated upon the things that were to assist you in your progress. Else you could not have found this place."

"Tell me this— I have been given to understand a power is exercised to prevent unwelcome visitors from locating this spot. There is an appearance here that indi-

cates a condition of perpetual spring. Does the same power keep severity of winter from being inflicted upon you? While you are located in a valley, you are at a considerable height above sea level and should, ordinarily, have extremely cold weather in the winter."

"We never experience winter. Should we wish to, for a purpose, we may. Come, I shall show you."

Within a few moments they stood before an opening which proved to be a natural tunnel through solid rock. After walking about a hundred feet they suddenly found themselves looking out over the lava above and below them. On the high peaks of the mountains lay snow that had never been melted. Far below waterfalls and cascades met their gaze.

Here, thought Crane, the outside world could be contacted any time. To him it was strange indeed.

"Do you never go out to see at closer range all these wonderful beauties of nature?"

"Oh yes, indeed. And it will be my pleasure to show you places no one who is not worthy is ever permitted to see."

"When we were walking along, I saw men and women, but no children. Where are they?"

"Concerning this you will learn later. Let us return —it is about time for the mid-day meal."

"Can you tell me about the antelope? Why did it so plainly show a friendliness toward me?"

"That, too, must wait for a little while. But you may know this. Had you been an eater of animal flesh, you would never have known that experience."

In a deeply thoughtful mood, he walked beside the girl. As they approached a large bungalow edifice, she explained certain features of the building's construction. The walls were so made that portions could be lifted and fastened, when the building took on the aspect of an outdoor sleeping room. With all the windows, if such they might be called, down, it appeared to be a large windowless house.

At this time the movable sections were up, to allow the fresh air to circulate through the interior. A long table in the center of the room was covered with a white tablecloth.

Soon men and women began to gather around the table, and Crane was escorted to a place at the right-hand corner of one end. After all had gathered around, the man who had interrogated Crane in the lodge room and who now stood at the head of the table at the end where Crane had been placed, raised his hands high above his head. The others likewise raised their hands and Crane also raised his. Then, bringing their hands down, keeping the arms straight until they were at the sides, all bowed toward the center. With eyes closed, they remained for three minutes in silent prayer. Then all were seated.

The Master—as Donald soon discovered everyone in this retreat called this man—then said: "Brethren, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you our guest, Donald Crane, whom we have been expecting. Tonight we shall assemble in the Temple, for the purpose of officially receiving him as a Brother."

A sensation he had never known before flowed through Crane. A warm glow suffused his entire body; he actually felt the friendly vibrations directed to him by all the members who were present and an indescribable ecstacy filled him. Instantaneously he felt as if he were raised to hitherto unscaled heights.

Afterwards he compared his feelings at this time with those which generally attended an individual upon being introduced to a gathering of strangers. What a contrast! So wondrous had been his introduction to and his reception by these strange people, he knew he would always treasure the memory.

Conversation began. The topics at first related to questions of travel and man's progress in the realm of inventions; then the discussion turned to psychology and philosophy. Crane found himself talking freely, as if he had known the members of the Brotherhood many years. Not until they had been eating for some moments did it occur to him that he had not noticed anyone serve the table. Puzzled though he was, he said nothing about having seen no one bring in the food. But he determined he would be more observant during the rest of the meal.

The meal consisted of three dishes of fruit; each was different from the other. They were deliciously prepared, and there was a most refreshing drink, which tasted to Donald as if it were made from the juice of crushed berries. In comparison with the portions served at tables in the outside world, the three simple dishes appeared to be very small. Still Donald found the meal amply satisfying.

So intensely interested did he become in the discussion, he was unaware of the meal having come to a close, until, casually glancing down, he discovered his plate and other dishes were gone. Furthermore, a quick exploring look told him not a single dish remained on the white tablecloth.

Donald then looked at Nona, who sat at his right. When he saw she was smiling mischievously, he was sure she was aware of his bewilderment and vastly amused by it. He decided he would not ask her if there was something queer, to the ordinary person, as to how the meals were served in this place.

A signal from the Master caused everyone to become instantly quiet. For a few moments all sat with bowed heads; then all arose and left the great dining room.

Nona conducted him to a portion of the little valley he had not yet seen. They walked in an easterly direction until they came to the mouth of a cavern, in front of which was a large wall of lava so situated as to almost completely hide the entrance. Only by merest chance, Donald recognized, would one without previous knowledge of its existence, stumble upon this orifice.

Soon they were walking swiftly upon a floor almost as smooth as if, instead of being nature's handiwork, it were the result of human labor. Crane wondered why it did not grow darker as they penetrated into the interior of the cavern.

Nona, living up to her role as guide, entered into an explanatory monologue.

"This ancient roadway, Donald Crane, thousands of years ago was trod upon by the feet of our ancestors. The land about us at one time was nearly as smooth as the cavern's floor upon which we are walking. No great mountains nor deep valleys, such as we now see, then existed. Giant trees and heavy tropical vegetation covered the earth, and huge animals of a kind no longer in existence, roamed the woods. Such a land stretched for many miles westward, and far down the west coast of North America.

"Then came the cataclysm that caused nearly all the land to sink into the ocean. Everywhere volcanoes spouted fire and boiling lava. Land arose in the east, and what is now the eastern portion of North America came into existence. What was then the eastern portion of the lost land, is now the western coast.

"A few of the people—individuals who had tried in vain to stem the tide of wickedness that then prevailed—came to this part of the country before the catastrophe occurred. After many thousands of years, those few had long since passed from the things of the earth and their descendants inhabited the country. The land was cultivated, roads were built, and the people were happy and contented. Nature did everything to favor these children of a lost continent. The monstrous animals and poisonous reptiles never molested them; and not even to this day has a single successor of these chosen people ever been in any way molested.

"Along the outskirts of the valley where these peaceful people lived, a warlike race of dark people began to

increase. These dark people slew many animals, and ate of flesh and fish. Sometimes they even ate each other. While they occupied much of the surrounding territory, they never inhabited or even entered the valley itself. They seemed never to be at peace, and at different times killed each other in great numbers.

"One day a terrific earthquake shook the country; then from out of a fissure came great stones, boiling mud and lava, which spread over the valley and for several miles beyond. All around the molten lava was flowing, but this one spot occupied by our people remained unharmed, the green vegetation continued to flourish, nor was there even an increase in the temperature.

"Heavy timber lined both sides of the roadway upon which we are now walking. The trees close to the roadway were gigantic in size. As the sea of lava poured in all directions, it carried before it everything in its path, until it came to this road. The big trees beside the road for a time stopped the resistless, seething tide, and then bent over, as if at last compelled to capitulate to the conqueror.

"The great mass of burning trees which the lava pushed before it, filled the roadway, and the boiling lava poured over the mass and smothered out the fire. This left the wood supporting the debris overhead. Later, when the lava cooled, the wood fell upon the floor of the roadway. If you will look closely, you will see some of it still in the roof that nature formed. The fallen wood was cleared away, and the road as you see it now was left.

"When the lava belched out of the fissure caused by the earthquake, such animals as could make their way into the cooler basin, which is now the home of the Brotherhood, came in search of shelter. The deer, the tiger, and the lion were seen to lie down side by side. During the weeks that followed not one animal was killed as food for another. Yet none were hungry. Other animals were overtaken by the flood of fire and perished. Still others escaped by racing ahead of the danger until they were beyond its reach.

"The eruptions ceased, and the people, looking up, beheld the great mountain that had arisen in the distance in so short a time. Our people called this newly arisen mountain, 'The Protector of the Brotherhood'. Many thousands of years later, the inhabitants of the outside world named it, 'Mount Shasta'.

"Since that first eruption, many others have occurred. Each time the lava was piled higher and higher over the surrounding country, and the peak of the great volcano grew to an altitude that placed its summit far above the clouds.

"As time rolled on all activities within the mountain ceased. Over a period of years only wisps of smoke or vapor were seen emanating from the enormous white cone, as if to warn that the 'Great Protector' was not yet asleep. Finally, as though it considered its work accomplished, all signs of life ceased. The Brotherhood had been, and forever would be, protected.

"Large quantities of ice and snow accumulated on all the peaks of the great mountain, until the precariously

perched, crushing weight could not longer be sustained. With a terrific, crackling roar, the ice gave way and huge glaciers tore down the mountain-sides. All the surrounding territory became ice-covered. Valleys hundreds of feet in depth, some thousands of feet in depth, were filled with ice. Gigantic animals, species now called pre-historic, were caught and remained imbedded for ages. Fossil hunters would weep tears of joy were they shown, as you will be, the remains of those long-departed-from-earth monsters."

CHAPTER III

The Lake of Gold

"MERELY A BRIEF outline of the activities of Shasta have been given you, but before long you will behold evidences that will make the combined details seem prodigious. It is necessary for you to learn that about Shasta and its surroundings which is not known to our brothers of the outside world, before you can proceed with other knowledge of a super-physical nature."

Thought Crane to himself, he could not have imagined it possible for anyone to acquire in so brief a time as much interesting information as he had received in the few hours he had spent under the tutelage of this girl. He thrilled at the thought of the vistas yet to be unfolded.

"Will you tell me if what took place here was merely a local affair," he queried, "or was it general throughout the land?"

"Do you not recall my telling you, land continued to rise east of here until a new continent came into view? Even the glaciers carried on their work elsewhere in the reformation of the land that had been pushed up."

"Now, I wish you would explain a phenomenon about which I have been wondering. I have been in the tunnels of various mines, and they were always as dark as

blackest night. Why is not this completely covered, underground roadway likewise submerged in stygian darkness?"

"If you will examine the walls and roof of the roadway, you will see they are composed of lava that emits a phosphorescent light. This is common in volcanic regions, but, perhaps, it is unusually pronounced here."

"I should have known," admitted Crane. "But even so," he continued in a thoughtful voice, "all this impresses me as if a superior intelligence had purposely arranged things, with the welfare of these people in mind. The preservation of the little valley, the almost supernatural way in which the roadway was covered and saved for use, impresses me as being the result of predetermination."

"All occurrences are the results of thinking," replied Nona. " 'Nothing happens by accident', is an axiom that has been handed down for ages. In some cases, however, with proper knowledge, certain laws may be applied through the thinking processes that will bring forth seemingly remarkable fruitage. For the uninitiated this would be impossible."

"Why is it, one may walk for hours here without feeling the slightest degree of fatigue?"

"Now that you have entered here, Donald Crane, no matter how strenuously you may exert yourself, never again will you become weary. In this place no one ever grows fatigued. Furthermore, you will be enabled to cover great distances with what will at first seem to you astonishing swiftness. You and I have been walking about

two hours, as time is ordinarily reckoned. What distance do you think we have covered?"

"My attention has been so engrossed with your interesting talk, I have not noted how fast we may have been walking. But I should loosely estimate we have gone about eight miles."

Nona laughed merrily. "You are more than forty miles from where you entered the roadway."

"Can it be possible? How do you explain this ability to travel so swiftly without being conscious of it?"

"This seems mysterious to you now, but you will learn, it is due only to a natural law. Any member of the Brotherhood may bring it into operation. Truly, it is not more startling than other things you have witnessed."

At this point Nona guided Crane to the right side of the roadway, where there was an entrance to an enormous cavern. After climbing about on the very uneven floor, they came to an opening that led out into the sunlight. Here Crane saw a sight that made him gasp. They were now at the bottom of what had once been a valley with a precipitous wall at its end. What is known as a box canyon was formed. At the foot of the wall and for some distance back, were the bones of huge animals.

Evidently these monsters had been driven to their last resting place by the glacial flood that finally overtook and crushed them within its cold embrace. Crane looked long at these remains, and smiled whimsically at the thought of the ecstasy such a find would bring to certain scientists.

He said to Nona, "I take it the climate was still tropical, even after the eruption of Mount Shasta?"

"Yes. The change took place a considerable time after the formation of the mountain. Yet the change was gradual, from tropic to semi-tropic, and, finally, to the climate that now prevails. The fossils you are looking upon are but a few of the many that abound here. There were many such traps in which the poor creatures were caught."

"That gives one much to think about." For a moment Donald was silent. "My conclusion is, at the period when these huge animals perished here, others of their species were annihilated elsewhere. In other words, their existence ended in general."

"That is true to a certain extent," replied Nona. "While the change was gradual, the great quantities of ice and snow overtook most of the species within a few years. Those animals that managed to escape the fate of their fellows, were later overtaken by starvation, disease, or accident. Not enough time was given them to propagate to the extent of continuing the species. Their part in the scheme of things had been accomplished."

"You speak of their part in the scheme of things. Do you mean they, as a species, had a certain part to play; and that, in their particular form, they no longer were necessary?"

"Yes. In the evolution of the Universe, forms are constantly changing to other forms. Each change is another step along the path of progress. The tiny atom, when placed under certain conditions, will attract to

itself whatever is most necessary for its comfort and welfare. Some day the atom may develop into the ponderous body of the mammoth. But once it has attained the size essential for its protection against others that might destroy it, or for providing for its subsistence, further growth is unnecessary.

"It is the law of nature that all life must sometime change in size. For some gigantic forms, nothing was left except to grow smaller. This would take eons; perhaps as long as it took them to attain their huge proportions. Their descendants also would have to occupy smaller and smaller bodies, to accord with their environment, until environment caused them to again ascend the scale in point of size. Thus the physical part of these animals must swing backward and forward, as does the pendulum. Each swing of the pendulum represents a cycle of ages. In a degree, each atom's evolution compels the evolution of every other atom in the universe. So when such ponderous bodies no longer were necessary, either to animals or to the universe, such bodies were discarded for others."

"You say the physical part," commented Donald. "I believe I am correct in assuming that the animal ego is supposed to inhabit a different and higher form, but that it leaves forever the other form as a species?"

"You may put it that way. But to make it clearer, it may be said, even though the species continue, as far as the physical form is concerned, the animal ego will in time dwell in a more highly evolved form, that is, in the form of another species."

"But in the case of these fossils, the extinction of the species was apparently not the result of a gradual process, but came about through a sudden calamity. Is there a suitable explanation for such an exception?"

"There is, indeed. When the gradual change is not rapid enough to conform to the necessity for the time, in the process of evolution, the Great Law provides for swifter methods. The Masters of all times have known this, and it applies to the human kingdom as well as to the animal. This is the esoteric explanation of the many cataclysms that have occurred at different periods."

"Ah! Then the land which was made to sink into the sea due to the many volcanic eruptions was an example?"

"Yes. The time had come for a complete change in the life of the human race. The few who knew, left for a less dangerous land."

"And what was this land called?"

"It has been called by many names, but by some it is now called Lemuria."

"Have there been many such occurrences?"

"Yes. Far more than even many who profess to know much about the past history of the world, may even imagine."

"Do you mean a great number of continents have risen, and, later, have sunk, as did Lemuria?"

"Yes. There is an unceasing change in the configuration of the earth's surface. As one portion rises from the sea, another portion becomes the ocean's bed. Sometimes the change is gradual, but the greatest changes are the result of the sudden convulsions."

"Why do many teachers and philosophers disagree as to the age of the earth?"

"Those who know, do not disagree. Many individuals have obtained through a higher knowledge, glimpses of the earth's history. Quite a few of these individuals, instead of following up the fragments through the same means, have added to their statements something of their own objective reasoning. Much of such error is the result of lack of control over the emotions, for it is only natural for man to become excited over an important discovery, which may cause him in his enthusiasm, to unconsciously rely too strongly upon his outward reasonings. But even so, many of the apparent contradictions will some day be made clear. And those who now seem diametrically opposed to each other, regarding knowledge of the mysteries of nature, will find both sides are correct. All life is made up of seeming paradoxes."

"But there have been so many statements, as to the probable number of years that have elapsed since the sinking of this continent in the Pacific Ocean. Can this be due to the reason you have mentioned – objective reasoning has been applied by many to some fragment of real truth?"

"Yes. Time, as we use the term, does not exist in the super-physical world. Because of the inability of the finite mind to grasp the idea of eternity, the human tendency is to measure all events with relation to years. Hence an individual, after learning something that is really true, will, through deduction or calculation, arrive at a conclusion as regards the time elapsed between

events. The conclusion may or may not be correct, according to the correctness or incorrectness of the premise."

"I think I understand. It looks, to begin with, as though the time given for the many changes which have taken place, was insufficient; this indicates the calculations were made upon wrong premises. Out of these errors arose the diversities of opinion."

"Exactly. Man is prone to consider matters from the viewpoint of a single earth life of the soul, and according to one civilization. Many earth lives and many civilizations are essential to a true concept. The continent now called Lemuria by some, has, during the history of the earth, risen and sunk many times. Other continents have done likewise, but, as one would logically suppose, with variations as to contour and size."

"I gleaned from some of my reading the claim that it was on this continent the sexes were divided. Is this true?"

Nona smiled and answered: "That great question! Yes. But not pertaining to the Lemuria they have in mind. This gives an example of how it is possible to be mistaken in regard to time. With the possible exception as to size, the Lemurian's physical form differed little, if at all, from the human form of our world today. Monstrosities existed, such as we do not have, but even on our earth many varieties of animals once lived that now are extinct.

"The supposition of an odd bi-sexual creature who existed under a very low standard of culture, is wrong. Not only was the man of that time much as he is today,

but the Lemurians reached a very high state of civilization. But when the land was destroyed, the race, so far as its physical evolution was concerned, was obliged to begin all over. The few who escaped were the only exceptions.

"It must be remembered the remnants who existed in a scattered way in other lands had not the means of as quickly evolving as they would have under the tutelage of the Lemurians. The Altanteans, also, before their destruction, had progressed far beyond our present civilization."

Nona's talk was all very interesting to Crane. She had cleared up many points, which nothing he had read or studied had satisfactorily explained.

"It appears there is a period during which a race attains a certain height in its upward path; then, with the exception of some scattered remnants, this race is wiped out; and must begin all over. But each succeeding civilization achieves a higher standard than the last one. That means even the present race of mankind must go through the same process?"

He looked toward the girl for corroboration of his conclusion.

"Certainly. The processes of evolution, involution, and devolution, can be carried on in no other way. You have observed all the works of nature are carried on in cycles. During the devolutionary period the inner evolvement is taking place, though from a physical standpoint it may not be apparent. Too many speak of it rather deploring-

ly, whereas it is as necessary as any other phase for the general progress."

Nona now turned and said, "Let us return to the roadway, and continue our journey."

When their march had been resumed, Crane said, "Will you tell me more about the country here? Other peaks impress me as being indicative of volcanic activity, especially the one called Mount Lassen."

"Many eruptions have occurred since the silencing of Mount Shasta," replied the girl. "As you may have observed before you entered the valley, Lassen still emits smoke and vapors. Much of the lava that came from Shasta was in turn covered by lava that flowed from Lassen. Like Shasta, Lassen was once very much higher than it is now. The glaciers, as they crushingly plowed over its extensive area, greatly diminished its height. Lassen's activity was much greater than Shasta's; then, as was the case with Shasta, all activity ceased; but the emission of clouds of smoke show it is not ready to entirely retire to the realm of the extinct. There are even occasional minor eruptions."

The roadway suddenly narrowed to the extent that they were obliged to walk in single file. This narrow passage made an abrupt turn to the left, and opened into a small but densely wooded place. Vines grew so abundantly as to conceal the entrance.

Crane and his companion pushed the vines aside, and they entered a beautiful little basin. Near the center was a small lake, whose shores were surrounded by the most beautiful verdure he had ever seen.

"I was told there was such a lake in this vicinity! Also it was referred to in a couple of books I read. But the man who told me had not seen it himself. I thought it was an imagined creation, or, possibly, an exaggerated description of some picturesque spot. A man with whom I talked in San Francisco, told me someone had said only one or two people had seen the lake, and that it was absurdly described as having shores of gold."

Nona smiled and said, "Let us go nearer."

The grass grew down to the water's very edge. Crane could see no earth until he approached near enough to see beneath the clear water. Then he saw the earth below the water was glittering with yellow metal. His amazement held him speechless for several moments. Then he turned and looked at Nona.

"The story was true!" he said in an awed voice. "Impossible!—All that shining metal cannot be gold."

"It is gold," she affirmed with convincing positiveness. "Yes, and the earth beneath this grass contains as much as you see in the water. If you will look about you, you will see there is quite a watershed that pours into the basin when it rains. The many upheavals loosened the gravel and nuggets in a lode that had previously been formed by eruptions and upheavals. This basin acts as a natural pan, as the miners term it, into which the winter and spring torrents carry the gold. The gravel and silt are carried out by the overflow; and the gold, being much heavier, remains in this natural pan. The result you now observe represents the accumulations of centur-

ies. Here it lies, awaiting the proper time when it may be used to benefit humanity."

"And has no one of the outside world seen it?"

"A man, not many years ago, stumbled upon it. But the sight of so much gold blinded him in other ways. He gathered up all he could carry, and, after going through terrific hardships, found his way back to his people. While he could not remember the exact location, he easily induced a band of men to join him in a search for the treasure. Because selfish greed was the motive of these men, they were not permitted to find the golden trove. After they had endured much suffering, they abandoned their vain quest, and returned to their homes, empty-handed. Never will it be found by anyone who may use it for selfish purposes only."

"Did not another man find the lake?"

"On the strength of what he had heard regarding the first man's experience, another man found the treasure. It may be said the latter was led to it through the experiences of the former. The latter, however, was a builder. With the gold he from time to time took from the basin, he launched several enterprises of great benefit to the people in this part of the country. He was a wise and good man. His friends became aware that, whenever his funds were low, he would disappear for a while; and that, when he returned, he was plentifully supplied with gold.

"Many times those who were eager to learn his secret, watched this man's movements. The Brotherhood protected him; they never permitted harm to befall him.

He became the motivator of vast projects and through his efforts much constructive work was accomplished. But at last he became too ambitious. A desire for greater power obsessed him. Then his plans began to fail, and it came to pass that he did not find enough gold to further the schemes he had in mind. Before he could do any more toward completing his original desires he was killed. His work had been accomplished. Some day another will come forward who will be guided here to make a proper use of this vast treasure."

CHAPTER IV

The Initiation

NONA HAD scarcely finished telling Crane about the adventures of those who had sought the wealth of the Lake of Gold, when three pigeons were seen circling overhead. Soon the pigeons alighted, two upon the shoulders of the girl, and the third upon Donald's right shoulder.

"These little messengers have come to remind us the evening meal is about to be served—and that there is work for us to do."

A small bit of fabric the girl took from her bosom was immediately taken from her with its beak by the pigeon on her right shoulder; then the three flew away.

Crane waited for her to speak.

"They will carry that bit of fabric to our friends. It will tell them their message has been received—and that we shall soon be with them."

"I take it these feathered creatures have been trained to convey communications when it may be necessary. But the one that took your token, it seemed to me, manifested more intelligence than would come merely from training."

"The idea may appeal to you as being strange, but they never were trained to do anything. There are many of these pigeons with us. Any one of our members may mentally call one or more, and may send them on errands. Until their service is completed, all activities of the birds he has summoned, are controlled by the mind of the one whose wishes are being carried out."

"Must the operator constantly keep in mind the bird's activities?"

"No. The operator may simply outline in his own mind the course to be taken and the duty to be performed, and mentally order the thing to be done. Because all minds, in the ultimate analysis, are but one mind, an attunement takes place, which causes the bird's activities to correspond with the thought held in mind by the thinker. When one knows and applies the principles involved in proper concentration, this really is not difficult."

"The afternoon is about gone," said Crane. "How can we manage to get back by the time our presence is required?"

"We shall return by a different way than the one which brought us here. I chose this longer way to give you an opportunity to see more of that which you are to learn."

As if to rest for a moment, she seated herself on a large, flat rock. "Sit down beside me. Lean back against the rock wall behind you. Now, relax completely, and inhale and exhale vigorously for a few moments . . . Relax still more, and be perfectly quiet."

Donald did as he was directed. Quickly he felt the strange, yet pleasant, sensation of his head growing lighter. Soon it seemed to him his whole body had ceased to be matter, that it had become something intangible, vaporous, ethereal. Just as he seemed to be losing consciousness, this feeling left him, and, to his astonishment, he found himself walking, with Nona beside him, into the great dining hall.

The process of dispatching the evening meal was much the same as had been observed during the mid-day meal. Crane, this time, remained keenly alert. The mischievous sparkle in Nona's eyes apprised him she was amused at his attitude. But this did not cause him to relax his vigilance.

When the short service had ended, and all had comfortably adjusted themselves, Donald looked down at the tablecloth and waited. He was unable to tell whether it had happened during the fraction of a second while his eyes were closing and opening, or while, in spite of his intentions, his watchfulness had momentarily failed him. But he found himself gazing intently, and with no awareness of having once shifted his gaze, not at merely an empty tablecloth. Instead, he saw his plate was before him and ready for service.

Nor, though he tried his best, did he succeed in seeing how or when any of the rest of the service arrived. Everything simply appeared in the place where it should be, without going through any ordinary process of appearing. Nona's expression, he thought when he looked at her, was much like that of a mother watching a child who

was disappointed over its inability to "catch up with tomorrow", and unable to understand why it could not.

Suddenly, as the realization of something he had known for some time came to his mind, he smiled at his own childishness. "Time" was a relative term, useful only in the physical realm. If these manifestations were brought forth through a super-physical process—and surely no means could have been employed without his perceiving some part of what took place—it would be useless to try to see the objects become manifest. That simply was the end of it.

The Master said: "Brothers and Sisters, at the appointed hour, we shall gather within the Temple for the purpose of conducting the ceremony of which you have been told."

The meal came to a close, and all left the dining hall. Nona conducted Crane to the sitting room adjoining the Temple Hall.

"This ceremony in which I am about to participate—can you tell me anything as to its nature?" asked Donald, and added, "I presume it may be similar to certain initiations I have gone through in becoming a member of other fraternal orders."

"Nothing may be made known to you, until you have proceeded with the ceremony sufficiently for it to be so disclosed."

Again he thought he detected a note of awe in her voice. It began to dawn on him experiences might await him the nature of which he could not even guess. He had been regarding the coming event rather superficially.

Now he sensed he was about to face an ordeal that had best be over and done. Was it a kind of fear that possessed him? Or a foreboding mixed with a keen desire to walk in untrodden paths? Well, whatever it was, he would see it through. If there was a thrill in store for him, had he not been wishing for something out of the ordinary to occur?

Still, under the strain of waiting he was becoming uncomfortable. He hoped they would begin before he became panicky, though he did not believe he would succumb to such a feeling. He had never been a coward. But there was something formidable in the atmosphere. He could not define it, but it seemed to hint of danger. Yet how could one be beset with danger among these good people?

He tried to think of something commonplace to say in order to start a conversation with Nona. But so inane were the words that occured to him, he refrained from voicing them. Nona did not seem disposed to talk. For the first time since he had met her, he felt ill at ease in her presence. She, too, he thought, was unlike her usual self. Try as he would, he could not shake off the peculiar mood that enveloped him.

At last a door opened. A man, robed in somber grey, approached and said, "Donald Crane, the Master has sent for you. Will you please accompany me?"

Donald arose and bowed to Nona, who only slightly inclined her head, as though the occasion were too solemn for speech; and the look of awe he had before observed was apparent in her expression.

The door through which he was escorted led into a small anteroom, where he was directed to strip himself of all his clothing. A loose robe, dark grey in color with a cord at the waist, was given him. This he donned. Then he was directed into the Temple room. The four chairs at the stations were occupied by men who wore robes of different colors. Each color, thought Donald, was probably symbolic of the particular office the station represented.

The Master sat at the east of the Temple.

Crane and his grey-robed guide paused as soon as their feet had crossed the threshold.

In a moment the Master said: "Donald Crane, thou hast sought for hidden knowledge. Thy desires have brought thee hither to be initiated into our Sacred Brotherhood. When thou didst find our retreat, thy joy was great. Thou hast received knowledge many yearn to have. Thou hast trod the Sacred Highway no mortal man hath trod since the Great Unseen Power gave it a roof, except those individuals who have been especially privileged to do so. Thou hast seen the mammoth fossils lying in decay, which was to show thee even the mightiest physical bodies are naught as compared with the unseen forces of nature.

"Thou wert puzzled while partaking of food that came apparently from nowhere, until thy inner knowledge told thee the secret of it. This was to show thee even the mightiest intellect may err when depending entirely upon the objective reasoning faculties. But when thy knowledge of the super-physical came uppermost, the matter

became plain to thee. Whilst thou wert waiting to be summoned unto this chamber, fears beset thee. Thy fears caused thee to yearn for a word of cheer, to comfort thee whilst preparations were being made for the ordeal that is thine to experience. This was to teach thee a truth thou already knowest full well, but which it was best to impress more strongly upon thy mind: that man is prone to fear whatever he doth not understand, or anything he cannot perceive with his outer senses. The Guardian will now instruct thee further."

Crane, instructed by the Guardian, now took three steps forward and paused again.

The Master continued: "Thou hast now taken the three steps toward thy initiation. The number three hath long been a symbol of deepest import. Except by and through the Trinity of the great unseen powers of the universe, nothing could be brought into existence. Always must there be a union of two elements before the manifestation of a third. The Guardian will now lead thee further."

Seven steps were now taken by Crane and his conductor.

After a short pause, the Master said: "Thou hast now taken the seven mystical steps, symbolic of the greatest of all mysteries. Even among the lesser mystics it is well known that man is constantly being influenced by seven rays emanating from the seven planets now known. These influences reach him through certain glands, full knowledge of which is not possessed by even the most highly trained physician, if he knoweth not the secrets of nature

which lie beyond the realm of the physical. This explanation of the number seven is but meager. As thou makest progress, more will be revealed to thee. Secrets of which thou hast never dreamed, may easily be solved by the use of this sacred number.

"Before thou mayest proceed further, it is necessary for thee to be admonished. Thou art about to set forth upon a journey that containeth many pitfalls; the way will be beset with formidable dangers. Only he who hath the courage to dare; only he whose will is sufficiently mighty to keep him on the path he hath elected to follow, in spite of the obstacles he will encounter, may hope to reach the goal. Many are those aspirants who have failed while thus attempting to shorten the way to the destiny all must some day attain. Some have lost their reasoning faculties; many have lost their lives. Only those who are able to endure and to conquer the terrific forces they challenge may survive.

"On the other hand, he who conquers, shortens his path of attainment by thousands of years. Never again can he feel the pain of unsatisfied longings. A harmony which words are inadequate to describe comes into his life; music not played by human hands is wafted to him upon the gentle zephyrs; it comes from spheres hitherto unknown to him; knowledge which would otherwise take many centuries to attain, is his to use; wisdom is developed that will ever insure a proper application of the knowledge gained; and there is quickened in him a love for all things, a love so deep and overwhelming, time and space cease to be; and he knoweth eternal happiness.

"Thou hast heard this warning, and this promise of reward. Art thou prepared to undertake or to undergo those ordeals which lie before thee? Or wilt thou be warned against the rashness of this initiation, and be content to take the slower, safer path?"

Though he was filled with awe, and trembled in every limb with the fear aroused by the Master's words, Crane managed to say, "I beg to be permitted to proceed."

"So be it unto thee. From this moment on, thou must tread thy path alone. These present, friendly and concerned for thy safety though they may be, may not accompany thee on thy journey. Thy friends must await thy return—if thou dost return."

Crane was now ushered to a narrow door, which opened apparently of its own accord. He passed through the opening, and the door closed behind him. For a moment he stood still to accustom his eyes to the gloom of his surroundings. A dim light emanated from no visible source. He saw he was standing on a large stone slab; he judged it was about two feet square. Then he perceived some stone steps which led downward. He started to descend, cautiously and slowly. But after what seemed an interminable length of time to him, he hastened his footsteps.

Thus he continued his descent for hours. Though he did not become weary of limb, he began to wonder if this was an endless flight of stairs. Would this monotony of going down step after step continue indefinitely? He wondered if the narrow shaft of light he now could see

would come to an end, and if that would mean the end of the steps. There was the ever-recurring realization that he had passed the place where he had hoped to find the end, only to see more steps still leading downward. This monotony, this sameness, this wondering, were driving him mad!

How had this stairway been built? Why had such a thing ever been conceived? Why had such a tremendous amount of labor been expended? What was the purpose? Where did these stairs lead? What would he find when he reached the bottom? Question after question, all of them unanswerable as far as his knowing was concerned, trooped through his mind. Was all this effort worth while?

He began to realize that he, perhaps, was not as desirous of obtaining this deeper knowledge as he had thought. He had believed he was about to undergo some sort of an initiation, but it now appeared he had ventured into much more than he had anticipated. This was real work. While he was thus communing with himself, he suddenly became aware that the stone steps he was now descending were broken and uneven.

The way was becoming more difficult. At times he was compelled to feel his way, for the light was growing dimmer. Several times he was in danger of falling, and he knew, if he did fall, he might roll down the steep incline. He imagined himself ending up horribly mangled. On one occasion, when he slipped and almost fell, he sat down to think matters over.

Should he give up this hazardous enterprise? Why

should he not return to the door he had passed through, and demand to be allowed to terminate the proceedings? Something seemed to tell him he could never gain admittance through that door until his mission had been fulfilled, whatever that mission might be. And he knew, if he did return, the way would be tortuous indeed as compared with his downward course. He doubted that he would have sufficient strength to make the return journey. More than this, even if he were able to make the return, he would be admitting his defeat. He, Donald Crane, had been conquered in trial.

No—a thousand times no! He would see it through, cost what it might, and whatever length of time it took. His old determination drove him to his feet. With his lips grimly pressed together, once more he started on his perilous descent. He had taken but one step below the one on which he had been sitting, when he noticed the light had become brighter. Then, to his astonishment, he found he had at last come to the end of the stairway.

He stood in a large square room, the ceiling of which was so high he could not see it in the gloom, though the light was much brighter than the one which had illuminated his way down the stairs. Donald seated himself on the bottom stair to rest. Joy filled him because he had continued his journey. What if he had elected to return, at the very moment when he was within one step of the end? Why had not the brightening of the light been perceptible to him sooner? Was it possible that, at that instant, for some reason, it had been made brighter through some means?

Well, why ponder over these things? He had accomplished his feat, and he was happy. Never again would he entertain fear or doubt. Everything was as it should be. The future held no unconquerable terrors for him. He had strength, and knew it was an enduring kind. Let them bring on whatever else was in store for him. He would prove to them they were dealing with a man of power.

A place in one of the walls moved. Slowly, as if it were moving on a pivot, a large, rectangular portion of the wall turned in such a manner as to afford an opening on either side of the slab, the edge of which was toward him. A grotesque being then entered and beckoned Donald to follow. This creature's air of assurance betokened the possession of power and authority, but the horribly hunchbacked figure inspired in Donald a feeling of repugnance not unmixed with fear.

Crane stared with disgust at the long arms which almost reached the floor; at the misshapen head that looked as though it had been crushed out of all human resemblance; and at the hard face, the features of which were set in cruel lines.

In spite of his misgivings, Donald followed the dwarf through one of the apertures, and found himself in a room much larger than the one he had just vacated. Here he discovered several other dwarfs much like this escort. At a signal from his guide, all these ugly creatures rushed toward Crane, and, with joined hands, surrounded him in such a way as to form a circle. With evident malicious glee, they danced around and around him. The vindic-

tive pleasure their faces showed, together with the absurdity of the performance, made him more uncomfortable than he had been before in his life. Round and round they danced, until the madness of it all made him feel he must scream.

Donald felt his reasoning senses were tottering. He made a supreme effort to control himself. Then he rushed toward that gibbering, fiendish circle, reached out to clutch at a dancing figure that impeded his progress, but his hand closed upon—empty air. Instead of finding his way obstructed, he felt himself falling, falling through black space.

He gave himself up for lost. Thoughts flashed through his mind: they probably had expected him to act otherwise; through his rashness, he had brought disaster upon himself. He felt the speed with which he was falling lessen. Then he sank into a slithering, slimy ooze, almost up to his neck. Through abysmal darkness he groped his way. He seemed to be in a low, narrow tunnel, that was filled nearly to the top with the sickening, slimy mud.

How long he struggled ahead he had no idea. He wondered if it was not useless to try to escape? Should he give himself up to the slime and end it all? He doubted that he could go on much longer. He reached toward the wall nearest to him to steady himself; and his hand came in contact with something clammy. It felt like some kind of reptile. Shuddering, he drew his hand away. The whole place was infested with the loathsome creatures. Was ever a man placed in such circumstances?

Almost overcome with terror, he cried aloud, "O God!

—Whatever else there may be in store for me, deliver me from this!"

Scarcely had this anguished prayer left his lips, when his foot came in contact with something solid. He discovered he had reached some steps that led upward. Soon he was free from the mire. His feet were walking on a solid floor. He saw a shaft of light flowing from an open doorway; he moved toward it, passed through the opening and fell in a faint.

CHAPTER V

More Lessons and More Wonders

When Crane opened his eyes he found he was reclining on a couch. The horrible experiences he had passed through were fresh in his mind. He must rouse himself, try to get a bath. That filthy, slime - - - . He was pleasantly surprised to discover he was clean and dry. He saw he was not alone.

Three grey-robed men were sitting near the couch, and regarding him with an expression of kind serenity. They had been watching his face, as if waiting for him to recover from his swoon.

"Brother, thou art now in safe hands. Thou hast returned triumphant from thy journey. Thou didst think unnecessary distress was being inflicted upon thee by those in whom thou didst place thy trust. Such was not the case. All thy experiences have been the result of thine own doing."

One of the grey-robed men thus addressed Crane; the other two remained silent, but continued to look at him with compassionate eyes.

"The tortures thou hast experienced, thou hast not physically undergone. Thy desire for knowledge hath led thee to seek and find the Brotherhood; thou hast

elected to shorten thy path of progress by many years. In so doing, thou hast invoked upon thyself the accumulated results of all thy past errors; this is to enable thee to go forth with the knowledge that thou must have, ere thou canst be permitted to enter into the life thou hast chosen. Hence, thy experiences have been only in thy consciousness.

"When thy way down the stairs became monotonous, thou wert relieved by thy thinking less of the monotony and by thy dwelling more upon the origin and purpose of those stairs. This was to more firmly impress upon thy mind the fact that monotony, or its opposite, is governed by the consciousness. The moment thoughts of weariness were supplanted by other thoughts, the way became less difficult.

"But when, after thy analytical survey of the situation, boredom came, and thoughts of the uselessness of it all began to assail thee, the way became more difficult than before. In desperation thou wast impelled to rest and meditate. It was then that the strength within thee was called forth, and thou didst resume thy journey down the stairs. This was to impress thee that life is ever thus. When mortal man is able to replace his useless and burdensome thoughts with others that search for causes, his troubles grow that much less. But when he admits he is becoming discouraged, his path of life grows harder and harder, until he is at last compelled to relax and think.

"Thus the Great Law brings upon man, through himself, experiences which will enable him to surmount his

troubles with his own strength. But when prosperity cometh, and man sitteth upon the crest of the wave and feeleth nothing can hurt him more, he doth relax his efforts and doth boast of his position to himself. Then suddenly he doth find himself sinking down, until he doth find himself again in the trough, out of which he must climb, a much wiser man. This is to teach him that never should he discontinue his search for knowledge and understanding, which alone can bring real power, notwithstanding his apparently prosperous conditions.

"All this was symbolized by the hardships thou wert conscious of experiencing. After thou hadst come to the end of the stairs, thou wert tried by the nerve-racking dance of the dwarfs; thy sufferings continued until freedom came in response to thy call upon the Divine. The loathsome creatures that surrounded thee were thine own thought creations of times past. This but shows how necessary it is to let none but wholesome thoughts enter the consciousness. All others will inevitably at some time become objectified in most undesirable conditions. —This will be all for the present. Now rest for a little while."

Crane lay back and comfortably relaxed. He drifted into a profound slumber; and it was some time later when he awoke and found himself in darkness. He thought it must be about two o'clock in the morning, and was on the verge of again relapsing into a restful sleep, when he felt an object of ponderous weight take its place beside him, but on the outside of the covers. He sensed it was a horrible, shapeless creature without limbs, which adjusted itself to its environment.

Donald attempted to throw the thing off onto the floor, but a snarling growl made him cease in dismay. His fear drove him to cover his head with the bedclothes. Then he felt the creature's shivering, and he thought it must be miserably cold. His horror gave way to pity. Probably some poor animal had become his bedfellow in an effort to warm itself. Who was he to deny warmth and comfort to a fellow creature in distress? He moved over, so as to leave his visitor more room in which to be comfortable. As he did this, he felt the load lift from the bed. The creature, whatever it was, was gone. He opened his eyes to peer into the gloom.

To his astonishment, he found he was sitting in his chair, facing Nona, as he had been doing when the Guardian came for him!

He was desirous of questioning Nona regarding his recent experiences, but she put her finger to her lips, and thus, silently, admonished him to be still. At that instant the very individual who previously had escorted him into the Temple, came forward and beckoned him to follow. Donald arose, and the two again went through the doorway which led into the Temple.

He was led into the center of the great hall, and placed so that he stood facing the Master.

The Master intoned in a sonorous voice: "My Brother, after many trials, and after much suffering, thou hast emerged victorious from the battle with thy lower self. Words can never adequately describe the tests thou hast endured. Though thy sufferings were only in thy consciousness, they were as real as any; in fact, more real

than any thou couldst have experienced physically. These ordeals were not brought upon thee to tamper with thy feelings, but in order to teach thee in a short time those things which otherwise might have taken thee many years to learn.

"Thy physical body did not move from thy chair. But in thy consciousness much activity was condensed into a few minutes, for, in the super-physical, time doth not exist. By what means this condition was brought to thee, will be made plain to thee later. Suffice it to say, thou hast left all such things behind thee forever. Never again will it be necessary for thee to undergo such trials."

The Master now addressed the other members who were present with these words: "My beloved Brothers and Sisters, it gives me great pleasure to announce that our new Brother, Donald Crane, hath been received as a member of our Brotherhood. Please make ready to conduct the usual ceremonies, through which we all have passed."

It is not permitted to record here the Temple ceremonies through which the new Brother was conducted. It may be told, however, that not until a late hour were the rites finished, and his induction into the Brotherhood completed.

Finally the Master dismissed the members. The Guardian then showed Crane where he was to sleep. The simply but neatly furnished room was small, yet large enough to permit the occupant to be comfortable.

When he awoke the following morning, the first sight that greeted his eyes was a lovely flower garden; he could

see it through the window without arising from his bed. Climbing roses had even found their way inside the open window and formed a fragrant wreath around it. Strangely sweet and refreshing were the odors brought to him by the cool morning breeze.

Until the sun replaced the dawn, he rested luxuriously, enjoying his surroundings. Then he arose and went to his bath. The tub was soon filled with clear cool water, in which he immersed himself. Never before had he experienced as delightfully invigorating a bath. Tiny bubbles seemed to seek out and linger at every pore of his body, then to burst or float upward, when other bubbles repeated their action. A prickling yet soothing sensation affected his skin, and seemed also to permeate his entire body. Later he learned this water came from a special spring, the walls and bottom of which were formed by radio-active rocks; that it was the contact with these rocks that imparted to the water the powerful vibrations which had so affected his body.

Although he slept only about three hours, never had he felt more renovated. When he was dressed he went into a large assembly room which adjoined the dining hall. Nona greeted him with a friendly "Good morning," and walked beside him to the table. Although he had not felt as if he were a stranger at any time since his advent into the home of the Brotherhood, his sensation this morning of his second day here was of really belonging.

Breakfast was over, and, as they again entered the large assembly room, Crane said to Nona, "This con-

sciousness of utter peace and harmony—does it possess everyone who comes here? Never before have I known such absolute serenity!"

The girl smiled comprehendingly.

"I shall be your guide again today," she said.

Once more they set out in the direction of Lassen Peak.

"We shall again walk, but this time over a different road. There will be ample opportunity for conversation and explanations, because we shall not hurry. We shall climb out of the valley and take the journey over the roof of the roadway we traveled yesterday."

Donald, as he listened to Nona's musical voice, again thought he was fortunate in having such a gracious guide.

Before his entrance into the valley, Crane would have thought it impossible to climb to the height they did in such a short time; or as easily. Rock after rock, crag after crag, they surmounted. He felt no fatigue, nor, he noticed, did the girl show any evidence of tiring. At last they were entirely out of the basin and, as they stood on a huge mound of lava rock, Crane beheld a panorama of beauty and grandeur which momentarily overwhelmed him.

Only a poet or an artist could dream of anything like this! Could this be reality upon which his human eyes were gazing? All around, great mountains towered. It was impossible, thought Crane, to conceive that those majestic heights had been achieved as a result of the earth's convulsions; rather, the impression was that those mountains had always existed thus. The green vegetation

that fringed some of these monarchs added to their charm by softening the severity of their majesty. Thus thought Crane. He turned his gaze downward into canyons where great trees grew to a size and stateliness that could not but draw an ejaculation of wonder and admiration from his lips.

"Never did I imagine it was possible for a mortal to behold so truly wonderful a scene!"

"Let us proceed further along the ridge," said Nona. "There will be more of interest to you."

They had walked and climbed for perhaps an hour, when Crane asked: "What is it that makes the rock beneath our feet vibrate so?"

"An undergound river. Hundreds of feet below us, are many rushing torrents. The porous lava rock is a splendid conductor for the vibrations made by those streams; even the sound of the passing waters can usually be heard. . . . Now you are to see something not seen every day by most people."

Nona led the way down a deep ravine, where a river noisily pursued its way among the boulders in its path. They continued down the stream until they came to a basin that was much wider than the stream itself. This, to Crane's amazement, appeared to be the end of the river. He saw that, though huge volumes of water continued to flow into the basin, where they churned and foamed, they did not completely fill the pool, but kept the same level.

"The 'River of Mystery' is what this has sometimes been called, and at other times, the 'Disappearing River'.

It literally disappears into the crevice formed by nature, and plunges for hundreds of feet almost straight down; then it flows on for miles under the great mass of rock, to emerge farther down in the same manner that it disappears. A river, full-grown, comes up through the surface rock, much like a huge spring. There are several smaller streams that do likewise."

"It is indeed a 'River of Mystery'," said Crane. "It seems impossible that we can be so far above the roadway we traveled over yesterday; yet I can see it must be thousands of feet beneath us."

"Yes. A great mass of rock lies between the roadway you saw yesterday, and the surface here. Let us walk to the mouth of the cavern you see in the distance; there is something that will interest you."

As they approached the mouth of the immense cavern of which Nona had spoken, Crane became aware of being surrounded by an atmosphere of much lower temperature than that further out in the open; and in the cavern itself he felt as if he had stepped from mild spring into midwinter. The reason for this curious phenomenon became apparent after they had walked a few feet into the cavern.

"Why, it's a cave of solid ice!" he exclaimed: "It looks as if it has been here for centuries and centuries."

At one place he saw, still imbedded in the ice, prehistoric monsters that he recognized must have been caught during the Glacial Period. The pictures and drawings made of such creatures by scientists who sought to reconstruct fossils into the appearance of the animals

as they actually existed, had always caused him to suspect those scientists drew too much from their imaginations. He had wondered if there were the possibility of those scientists having made many mistakes in their methods of reconstruction. Now he mentally apologized, because, while in minor details the drawings he had seen might show a variance from these monsters, he could not but observe those scientific reconstructions had been surprisingly accurate.

Through many bypaths or side tunnels Nona and Crane passed. Here they saw a mammoth, there a dinosaur, and so on through the list of the huge animals that had roamed the woods of prehistoric days.

"It appears to me that our scientists and authors overlooked several, describing or reconstructing some of these big fellows," commented Donald. "At least I do not recollect any mention of a few species I have looked at hereabouts."

"You are correct," agreed Nona and smiled. "A number must be added, ere the list will be complete. It is safe to state some of these will not be found during the present civilization."

"And to think this is the same ice that slid off the mountains in those long ago days, to be in turn covered by the lava, as it had covered what lay beneath it. What a marvelous thing to contemplate! Strange, isn't it, that the terrific heat of the lava that enveloped it did not melt it?"

"It did to an extent. That accounts for the spaces which make the caverns and tunnels. But the ice in turn cooled

the lava, in spite of the great heat, before more than comparatively little of the ice melted."

"Of course! How absurd of me not to have thought of the reason. This is like being in the Arctics. Who, without having seen it, could conceive of there being such a quantity of ice in a place like this? And I surmise there is a much greater area of ice-covered land than this, which is within range of our vision."

"Thousands of square miles of ice lie under the bed of lava that covers them. These caverns you have seen are few as compared with those you have not seen. There are thousands of them."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Crane. "And is it known to the world that these ice caverns exist here?"

"Yes. In the public libraries are descriptions of the ice caverns of Mount Shasta and Mount Lassen. But the authors of the descriptions were not in a position to see what you have seen."

"Do you think it probable that further discoveries will be made in the near future?"

"New discoveries are constantly being made," said Nona. "Much will be learned by explorers before many years have passed. But some things they will never see — will never know."

Instead of leaving the cavern by way of the great aperture they had entered, they emerged through a different opening. What a contrast to the bleak, icy depths they had just left, was this green valley, where song birds warbled, squirrels scampered and chattered, small cottontail rabbits played or nibbled at the grass or tender

leaves about them, and several antelopes moved gracefully about. These denizens of the wilds, when Nona and Crane came near them, merely looked up in mild attention, or continued their various activities.

The two sat down near a small spring to relax and to drink of the clear water from a shell that once had belonged to the sea.

"These little animals about us act as if they were entirely unafraid," remarked Crane, and asked, "Have they all been tamed?"

The girl's laughing eyes showed his query amused her. "No creature in this valley has ever had cause to be afraid of human hands. There are many haunts, such as this, which have never been visited except by members of the Brotherhood. Hence the lack of fear among them."

Nona emitted a curious sound from her lips and teeth. It sounded to Crane like the blending of a whistle and a chirp. . . . Almost immediately a flock of little birds fluttered about them. They perched on the girl's shoulders, on her lap, wherever they could find a place to alight. Several favored Donald, who sat motionless, lest he disturb them into flight. Then began a chorus of such wondrous beauty Crane was moved almost to tears.

It is impossible to describe the feeling that comes to one when denizens of nature that ordinarily are distrustful of the approach of man, come to him and linger about him with perfect confidence, as these little feathered friends of the woods clustered around Nona and Donald. He felt this experience alone was worth many trials and difficulties. But he was to be thrilled even more.

An antelope, a little larger than the others that lingered in the valley, walked leisurely and gracefully to Crane; and, as he almost unconsciously extended his hand, the beautiful animal laid its muzzle in his palm and looked up at him with an infinitude of trust and love. Unashamed, Crane let the tears he could not hold back trickle down his cheeks. When, upon his entering the sacred precincts of the Brotherhood, he had met with this tenderly trustful overture from one of nature's shyest children, he had been strangely affected. Now, this repetition – which symbolized to him something too sacred to express even in thought – filled him with an emotion almost too profound to be endured.

CHAPTER VI

New Thrills

As if reluctant to do so, the antelope took away its muzzle; then, as it lay beside him, five other antelopes in succession went through the same procedure as the first. What could this mean? He looked at Nona as if to question her, but, when he saw the strange look of awe he had seen before upon her face, he refrained from words.

Then a filmy something seemed to pass before his mind, and a hazy, indescribable scene floated before him – a scene that seemed to belong to a period of long ago. It was too intangible for him to see it clearly, nor could his vision penetrate the seeming mist that was as a veil, scarcely hiding yet not revealing some memory of the dim past. Then it was gone. Try as he would, he could not bring it before him again.

Once more he wished to question Nona, but before he had time to voice his query, she said:

"Be not impatient. Do not force it. It will come when it will. . . . Impatience or anxious desire will but keep it from you."

He abandoned the idea of asking about his intangible vision of a moment before.

"May I inquire concerning other things? With reference to what took place last night, I was conscious of passing through many bitter tests. Had I been hypnotized in order that I might have, or feel I was having those experiences? And were those experiences directed by someone?"

"No. You were not hypnotized. Nor did anyone, other than yourself, have aught to do with directing the experiences. In your thirst for knowledge and self-development, you caused the Great Law of Compensation to act with such intensity as to bring upon you experiences that otherwise would have taken thousands of years, as we now count time. Thus, to that extent, you shortened your evolution. It may be said, you yourself did the directing, by causing your Higher Self to take care of these 'Readjustments'."

"I must have been guilty of exceedingly bad behavior, to have precipitated last night's experiences upon myself."

"Not necessarily. These things sometimes come, not as self-inflicted punishments, but as preparation for a higher and better existence."

"Then, is it essential for the disciple to go through a certain amount of suffering? Is it true that the heights of conscious attainment must always be through suffering?"

"Oh, no! It is possible for the disciple to attain a knowledge, which, if he applies it, will make his path of evolution smooth and easy. But a frailty of human nature is a tendency not to apply knowledge after it has been attained. One may possess ever so much knowledge,

yet be too ignorant to make proper use of what he has learned. Still, one might say that one has not really learned. One who has learned well, will not be too indolent to use wisely his attained knowledge. And while the law is that ignorance is not excused, the individual who knows yet does not apply the law, will bring upon himself much harder reaction than will he who disregards the law because he is ignorant of it."

"Then I take it, if one rigidly disciplines himself to the application of the law without once faltering, he will find the road easier than the brother who gives way from time to time to the dictates of nature, and feels he may rest a little from his self-imposed rules of conduct. In other words, he pays the penalty for the infraction of his own rules, let his breach be due to indolence, natural appetites, or something else."

"That is a good way to put it," said Nona. "Also it sometimes occurs that an individual, after advancing to great heights, succumbs to temptation; and, due to this, is obliged to outwardly retrace the path he has already once trodden. Inwardly, there can be no retrogression, but the physical re-establishment in such case seems far more arduous. Or an individual may have been selected to do a great work for the benefit of humanity. Such an one must have the proper understanding to enable him to carry on the work before him. Special preparation is necessary."

"Experiences, at times, come to people through a predetermined plan – so I deduce from the case you have just mentioned."

"Not at all in the way you mean. Yet, in a way, everything is predetermined. If you mean an individual is not always responsible for his experiences, your assumption is wrong. If one is selected for a work, it is because his own previous activities have made it possible for him to be so chosen. His own free will in governing his conduct has brought to him all the results of such conduct. Each individual predetermines his future by his own acts of the present."

At this point in the conversation, Crane, who had been looking at the bubbling waters of the spring, raised his gaze, and saw they were surrounded by what he thought must surely be all the inhabitants of the valley. Numerous rabbits, squirrels, and other small animals, nestled beside the antelopes, or playfully hopped or jumped about. They acted as though they enjoyed having human visitors.

"Granting that these little folks are fearless, because no human being has ever harmed them, I am impressed that their gathering around us has a deeper significance. Isn't there an explanation, besides just their fearlessness?"

"Every member of the Brotherhood radiates a friendly and soothing influence toward all living things." The girl gently patted the antelope that lay close to her. "They are attracted by this influence, and wish to be near the presence which radiates it. At the same time, they are all caused to feel a warmer friendliness toward each other; hence they flock together as if all were of the same species."

"And, upon our departure from here, will the feeling of close friendliness among them cease?"

"No. But it will be less pronounced than while we are here. This is because the influence radiated by us is far more powerful than the feelings they radiate to each other."

"What of the animals and birds of prey?" asked Donald. "How do they behave among these gentle creatures?"

"They are alike. . . . See that eagle circling above us? . . . We will call him down, and see what happens."

Again Nona emitted her peculiar whistle. The eagle dropped downward, as would a falling stone, until it almost reached the ground; then it balanced itself, and gracefully alighted within a yard of where the girl and Donald sat. Although the great wings noisily fanned the air about them, not one bird and not one animal made an effort to escape; all regarded the eagle with the same mild interest they had exhibited upon the entrance of the two human visitors into the valley. The great bird settled down with an air of enjoying itself amid its many hosts.

"Remarkable!" ejaculated Crane. Then he added in a whimsical tone, "Most assuredly, I should hesitate to describe this assemblage – particularly the manner of our latest caller and his reception – to anyone who had not himself witnessed something of the kind."

"Until he could experience it himself, no one could understand. And, as we have observed, a human trait is to doubt or fear whatever is not understood."

"What wonderful experiences people are deprived of enjoying due to this trait," said Crane. "It is a great pity that it is thus."

"Yet it is as it should be," replied Nona; "Without those doubts and fears, man would have no incentive to investigate, and there is no learning without investigation. . . . We will now leave our furred and feathered friends – as there is much more for you to see."

It was with genuine reluctance that Crane arose with Nona to leave the peaceful little basin and its friendly inhabitants. But the anticipation of beholding other wonders soon occupied his mind. He thought to himself he was like a child who was going into a strange land and was eagerly expectant of seeing it knew not what.

They climbed out of the little basin and were soon again going over the rugged country toward Lassen Peak. Occasionally, as they climbed in and out of the many depressions along the way, he observed a yellowish sand that was pocketed here and there. He gave the deposits only casually notice until, in a hollow place that was somewhat larger than the others, he saw a large quantity of the peculiar yellow stuff.

"Is not a part of that yellowish sand, gold?" he inquired of Nona.

"This at which you are looking is not gold. Your mining experience will enable you to quickly see what it is, if you will examine it more closely, though it may have a trace of the precious metal. In your mining terms it is known as iron pyrites. However, many of the little deposits do have gold in them. This pyrites or 'fool's

gold', as it is often called, exists in large quantities in different parts of these mountains. More than one unfortunate has labored hard and feverishly without stopping to rest, only to learn, after he had gathered a quantity, that it was valueless. Just ahead of us is a larger depression, into which we shall descend."

When they had reached and climbed down into the depression, Crane saw many nooks and crannies that were almost filled with a fine, yellow sand. Nona told Crane to run his fingers through the contents of one of these. He did so, and immediately knew it to be gold. Then he dug deeper into the bowl-like crevice, and found a number of nuggets of different sizes and shapes. He looked around the shallow they had entered, and saw many of these crevices or small depressions. Nona told him all contained some of the precious metal.

"What a find!" he exclaimed. "Enough gold is here to run a government."

"Yes – or to ruin it." The girl's tone was quiet, unexcited.

"There must be other places like this hidden away in these mountains."

"Thousands of them," said Nona. "From time to time someone discovers one or more of them – the smaller or less important deposits. The vast wealth that lies hidden here is not for merely one generation. Some of it will never be found."

"Once this would have excited me beyond measure," said Crane. "Now, strangely, it is only interesting. Even the marvelous 'Lake of Gold' I was permitted to see,

did not arouse the feelings that once would have been mine under like conditions."

"Had your consciousness not arrived at a stage above the desire for riches, you would not have been allowed to see the lake, nor many other things. . . . Do you see that wisp of smoke in the distance? That will be our next stop."

"That appears to be far away. Are we going to walk or climb, as we have been doing?"

"No. In a few moments we shall be there."

It seemed to Crane that he had taken scarcely a dozen steps, when he found they were many miles from the depression where they had found the gold. Now the scene was entirely different. A peculiar odor was in the air. It was like a blending of steam from hot, stagnant mud with the fumes of sulphurous vapor. Crane observed they were in the midst of a field of geysers and hot springs. The craters of the geysers were filled almost to the top with a boiling, seething mass of water and mud. Occassionally one would throw some of the hot liquid high into the air. Then another would perform in the same way; in the distance still another would do likewise. Looking further westward from where they stood, he could see a lake of boiling water, and all around the lake he saw smaller, variously-colored, steaming, sputtering mud holes which gave off a conglomeration of smells.

The rock beneath their feet, as they walked along, trembled.

"This shaking is caused by the surging, boiling waters."

explained Nona; "It is as if they were striving to break through the unyielding roof that holds them in check."

"This is stupendous!" Crane mused aloud; "Nothing I have heard or read has given me any conception of the magnitude of such a place. Yet, with volumes of writing, one could not adequately portray this. . . . Is it not possible that some day the boiling mass beneath us may at last conquer the rock above it, blow it up, or cause it to fall in?"

"There are places where something of the kind has occurred. Step over this way, and you will see some evidence of it."

Crane followed where she led, and in a few moments he found himself looking upon an immense crater, in which the mud appeared to be boiling more furiously than in any of the pools he had seen, except the geysers themselves.

"The rock did give way here," said Nona, "and those larger craters were formed in the same way. Even some of the geysers were formed by the hot water or mud breaking through cracks or crevices in the rocks; and through the constant spouting, the craters were formed later."

"But a few moments ago, we were in a frigid atmosphere, among enormous ice caverns. Now we are confronted with the evidences of the most terrific heat, and a torrid atmosphere. What an amazing contrast!"

"Yes, there has been much warfare here between heat and cold," said Nona. "First one has been up-

permost in the struggle, then the other. Thus it will continue; and each will dominate during its cycle."

"I presume the different colors, and the different odors, we have seen and sensed, are due to the various minerals in these geysers and mudholes?"

"Yes. Much sulphur, as you may recognize by the taste and smell, is contained in some. The contents of others are purely alkaline; and still others contain enough arsenic to poison all the people of a nation."

"I notice some of these do not emit steam or vapor; that they do not gurgle or boil. Are they cooler than the others?"

"Yes. If you will step over this way, you will see that here is a spring of boiling water. Now, this one, which is within two or three feet of it, is as cold as ice."

"What is the explanation of this?"

"In one place, the fissure connects the hole with the heat strata below; while the other connects in the same way with the ice that is held beneath the lava and does not penetrate as far as does the heat. Where the water boils up in a heated condition, the two crevices have intercepted each other; the hot liquid mixes with the colder water; and, if there is a predominance of the hotter fluid, there is greater activity at the mouth of the crevice, which has been formed into one of these holes or craters. This is why the geysers throw their contents into the air." She was silent for a moment, then, with an expressive gesture, said, "Now we shall pass from this to another view, where you will behold what comparatively few people have seen."

After they had left the geyser field, they proceeded over an extremely rough area of the hardened lava.

The numerous caves and huge caverns caused Crane to exclaim with wonder: "What a country! An army could be hidden here without much danger of being discovered by the enemy. I have a feeling such might at some time have been the case."

"You are right. A dark skinned people, not a great length of time ago, concealed themselves here; then, with a mere handful of men, they nearly annihilated an entire army of United States soldiers. Only partial details of that fateful expedition have been recorded; the matter in its entirety has never been disclosed. To an extent, the vibrations of that conflict continue here."

Nona ceased speaking, and drew Crane's attention to a vista in the distance. "We are now able to command a better view of the geysers."

What he saw made him gasp. Hundreds of rainbows, of colors and hues he had never seen in other rainbows, greeted his eyes. Each beautiful arch appeared to be interlaced with others; through the steaming vapors they shone with such vividness as to dazzle the eyes; and, though he was not an artist, they aroused in Crane's soul a wish that he might paint them.

For several moments they stood silently contemplating the beautiful display.

Nona said, "The day is almost spent, and it is time for us to return."

Crane looked at her in surprise. "Why, I feel as if we started out only an hour or so ago. Yet, considering all

you have shown me, my intellect says we must have been traveling for a month." He glanced skyward. "Yes, I see the sun has almost set. Strange – I haven't given missing the mid-day meal a thought."

"You will never again feel hungry, though you may partake of food or not, as you wish. You have risen above the food consciousness."

Crane then saw they were already approaching the great dining hall, where the others were gathering. The meal was eaten with the usual accompaniment of friendly conversation. At the conclusion, the Master said:

"Beloved, we shall gather in the Temple for our usual Sabbath Eve lesson."

In the Temple Crane listened to the most instructive lecture he had ever attended. Matters of which he had never heard before were discussed in such a simple and clear manner that he knew the statements made were true ones. Many mysteries of life, that in the past had puzzled him, were now made plain. The process of life itself, from the feeble amoeba to the perfected human physical form; the manner in which the physical form disintegrated that the life of that form might enter a higher manifestation; the vicissitudes encountered by the central spark within each manifestation under different conditions: these, and many other phases of existence were dealt with in such a way as to give a definite conception of all that took place.

When the lecture had been completed, all the members of the Brotherhood passed to their respective sleeping quarters.

Alone in his room, Crane began to meditate upon the events as they had occurred since his advent into this secret place. Looking back to when he had read the book that had induced him to seek the Brotherhood, he smiled as he asked himself if he were satisfied with the result of his search. It seemed scarcely conceivable that as many wonders as he had already seen, could be. Yet he knew there were other things in store for him to know. While the old impatience to be up and about no longer possessed him, the desire still glowed within him to keep on with his investigation of those things so near to his heart. His intuition told him of a few, of which he had obtained glimpses, but withheld the key to mysteries yet to be penetrated.

While he thus meditated, he was conscious of an inner knowing that at the proper time all would be unfolded to him; there was no hurry. Then a feeling of unutterable peace and power came over him. He felt he was now a superman. Yet this consciousness was untinged by the slightest sense of selfish pride. This mood still possessed him when he went to bed; and instantly he dropped off into a dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER VII

Memories of the Past

WHEN CRANE awoke the next morning, the eastern sky, already tinged with red and yellow-gold, heralded the rising of the sun. Again he felt the sensation of exhilaration he had known the morning before. He emerged from his bath, dressed quickly, and made his way to the breakfast table.

After breakfast was over, Nona said to him: "On the Sabbath each member of the Brotherhood passes the day alone. This day is given to meditation upon the happenings during the week; the lessons of the last six days are fully gone over in order to extract from them all they may convey. You may spend the time as you wish. Your thoughts will guide you as to your activities. . . Peace be with you."

With no definite idea as to how he should direct his steps, Crane went out. He strolled through orchards and flower gardens, around and between springs and rivulets, until he paused under the shade of a great tree, the lowest branches of which were high in the air. Here he threw himself down on the ground and gave himself up to the enjoyment of his surroundings. The sun was now high in the east; and silence reigned except for the

occasional buzzing of a bee and the twittering of birds. Now and then a humming bird would pause to extract the nectar from a flower. Butterflies with gorgeous wings lazily floating from blossom to blossom added still more of life and color to the picture.

The air, pregnant with that indefinable something that savored of spring, was richly laden with the odors of flowers, green grass, and new leaves. The more tender twigs and leaves moved and swayed with a soft rustle, such as might be made by a silken garment when caressed by a wafting breeze. High above great snowy-white clouds drifted; sometimes they obscured the sun and caused fleeting shadows to skim across the green surface below, only when they passed on to leave the earth greener and fresher than before.

Yielding to the pleasurable sense of relaxation that came over him, he interlocked his hands behind his head, and closed his eyes. Once more he began a review of his experiences since he started his search for the Brotherhood. When in his musings he arrived at the curious actions of the antelope, for the moment he forgot all else.

What was the reason for the curious procedure of the animal when he came in contact with it? An incident of his childhood days – one he had not thought of for many years – came into his thoughts. His father had been showing him through a zoo. An antelope, confined within an enclosure made of wire, had made frantic efforts to break through. Its wish, apparently, had been to reach the visitors. When they went away, it had looked after them with longing eyes. Neither then nor later

had he given the incident much thought, but now he recalled it in every detail.

Before his mental vision there passed another scene. So dim was it at first he almost despaired of pushing aside the misty curtain that baffled all his efforts to see what lay beyond it. Suddenly the haziness gave way to a clearness that was startling. . . . He saw a cave that served as a rude habitation for a very primitive people. The people were naked, save for a piece of the skin of some animal thrown across the chest or around the waist.

There were a few women and several children. Some of them were sprawled out in front of the cave; others squatted as if in a waiting attitude; and still others jabbered and gesticulated in a peculiar way, as if they were indulging in argument. Among them was a boy about ten years of age, who, as did a few others of the children, merely looked on or listened.

All ceased their occupations and sprang up in excitement. Several men – great hairy fellows – approached the cave. Each bore an animal or a portion of an animal that had been taken in the chase. Those who had remained at the crude habitation excitedly examined the spoils. All were dancing and jabbering, except the boy who had been so quiet before the arrival of the hunters.

The boy was attracted to a half grown antelope that lay with the other carcasses. He looked at the little body with pity, and with desire to have such a one alive to play with. He stroked the graceful neck and head softly, while he crooned a primitive lullaby. To his joy and amazement, the little creature opened its eyes and looked

up in evident wonderment. Then the boy gathered the little antelope in his arms, and carried it over to one side of the cave, where he rocked it to and fro as if it were an infant.

Gradually the little fellow recovered its strength, and with curious eyes began gingerly walking about as if to inspect this strange place. One of the men, upon seeing it alive, rushed at it with a club to dispatch it. The boy gesticulated, as though he were trying to prevent the murder of his pet. Paying no heed to the lad, the man compelled the animal to retreat into a corner, where it was at the mercy of its would-be slayer. In desperation, the boy picked up a big club and brought it down with all his strength upon the head of the giant.

The huge form relaxed and sank to the ground. Then the boy took his pet in his arms, and tremblingly waited for whatever was to follow. When two of the other men came forward, with the evident intention of finding out what was the trouble, the youthful defender placed his antelope behind him and brandished his club in a way that indicated his determination to fight to the last. Of course the boy thought the two men also wanted to kill his pet.

The men, including the one who had fallen but who had now risen to his feet, looked at the boy in bewilderment, as if they wondered what could have gone wrong with him. The one who had been struck down seemingly bore no resentment for the blow he had received, but like the others, stared curiously at his assailant. The animal meanwhile had sensed it was being protected from some

danger, and stood with an air of confidence behind its defender. The men, unable to grasp the situation, finally shook their heads, and signified their willingness to let the lad, since he felt so strongly about the matter, have his way.

Thereafter the boy and the antelope were constant companions. Day after day they could be seen wandering on hill and in dale, each contented in the company of the other. No one seemed to object to having the little animal about, although it nosed here and there around the primitive habitation, in an effort to locate something to eat that, as was often the case, might be hidden; or to satisfy its curiosity regarding some new kind of smell. Nor did any of the hunters show any desire to kill the pet.

As he grew, the boy became more and more a lover of the woods. Often he did not return to the cave at night, but remained in the open, curled up at the root of a tree with his odd friend; though, on more than one occasion, prowling beasts that made their forays during the dark hours, forced him to sleep on an overhanging branch. He always managed to assist the antelope to clamber up and share his elevated sleeping perch. There they would rest as well as they could until dawn, or until the danger had passed.

Time after time they found other antelopes cavorting about. At first they were not unafraid of this strange being who accompanied a member of their species. Then gradually, they came to know that he in no way menaced them, and after a while they accepted him as a matter of course. He soon learned a certain sound,

something between a snort and a hiss, was their warning that danger was at hand. And many times, after he became able to accurately imitate this sound, he saved his four-footed friends from being harmed by his own people. Before long he had conveyed to them the fact that he was different from those who killed for food.

In one instance he succeeded in giving the warning soon enough to prevent one of the antelopes from being slaughtered by a rude device made for the purpose of maiming larger game. At another time, because he himself had not yet discovered the menace, one of the beautiful creatures was flung high in the air and thrown with a sickening thud against an embankment, from where it rolled down with two broken legs. Then the boy labored to move the injured animal to a place where he thought it might be safe; and, to protect it from other more predatory creatures, he constructed an enclosure. For weeks he brought it food and water, and cared for it; so at last he had the pleasure, after the bones had knit together, of seeing his patient able to walk, when it went back to its regular way of living.

All this Crane perceived in a detached way, as though he were dreaming. He was conscious of being a part of the play, and at the same time curiously aware of being also an observer. His objective reasoning became more active concerning the situation, whereupon he gave the lad a closer scrutiny. Then he made a sudden and startling discovery. He and the boy were one and the same.

The picture faded from his view, when once more he

found himself upon the grass at the root of the tree, where he had elected to relax and enjoy the surroundings for a while. He knew he had not been dreaming; that a glimpse into the past had been his; that in the vision was something he was supposed to fathom. That he might if possible find the hidden lesson in the experience, he commenced an analysis of all he had seen.

Pursuant to but a brief period of concentration upon the matter, another scene came into his view. Along a mountain and desert country a man staggered and stumbled. His lips were dry and cracked; his tongue was swollen; his breath came in short gasps. Plainly, he was dying of thirst. He stumbled against a boulder that lay in his path, and rolled a great distance down a mountain-side. Unhurt, he arrived at the base of a rock that rose toweringly into the sky. Under the rock he quickly caught sight of a damp sandy spot which was surrounded by small tufts of green grass. With frenzied activity he commenced scooping out with his hands a depression in the cool, wet sand, in order that the water might gather in a sufficient quantity to slake his thirst. Some of the sand he placed in his mouth, and sucked greedily what little moisture it contained.

As he waited for the water to gather, he saw, lying a short distance from him, a full-grown antelope. It had evidently smelled water there and had endeavored to approach it, but, owing to the location of the seepage, the animal had been unable to reach it. Weakened by its want of water, it had apparently resigned itself to its fate. The digging taking place at the spot it had tried

to reach attracted its attention, and it looked up with an expression of mute agony.

The man's heart was smote with pity. Yearningly he looked at the slowly gathering drops of water, then turned his gaze toward the thirsting creature near him. The man filled his cupped hands with water, and holding them together, moved, as if through a mighty effort of all his will, to the side of his fellow-sufferer. Greedily the poor animal sucked up the small quantity of liquid, then licked the friendly hands, as if it hoped to extract more of the precious fluid. The man dragged his four-footed friend nearer to the seepage; then, as fast as the water accumulated, passed it to the antelope. With an almost super-human effort, he restrained his own desire to drink.

At length the creature became strong enough to stand, and a little later, with its thirst completely quenched, it nosed its benefactor as if in thanks, and started away. Crane, following the movements of the animal, saw it finally reach more friendly pastures where it mingled with others of its kind.

Meanwhile, the man began to give attention to his own wants. Putting some more of the wet sand in his mouth, he waited for the depression to fill, as it had before. To his horror, he saw the seepage had stopped. Feverishly he dug deeper, but without avail. Now he realized what he had given the antelope had exhausted all that would come forth; none was left for himself. He was too weak to go further. The disappointment caused him to collapse, and he lay face down on the

little pile of sand, the dampness of which was fast evaporating in the intense heat.

He was gasping his last, when there appeared beside him an elderly man who said: "My son, in thy tenderness toward the animal, thou hast deprived thyself of that which would have sustained thy physical expression. Thy will-power was taxed to the utmost, yet thou hast been able to conquer the desires of the flesh, to the extent of letting the flesh perish, that another might live. Thy sacrifice, however, was only seeming; for, though thou art about to lose thy present tenement, a greater dominion shall be given unto thee, as thou art to learn. – Come – we shall pass on to realms more shady. . . ."

The elderly one took hold of the hand of the fallen man, and raised him from the ground. The two passed on out of sight. Crane saw the physical body still lay where it had fallen. It was as if the man had possessed two bodies, one of which had separated itself from the other. Though one of the forms lay face down upon the sand, Crane recognized that it, as well as the one which had passed on, was his own.

Many years later, a party of men who passed over the spot, saw a human skull and a few scattered bones – mute testimony of a tragedy that had occurred there long before.

Again Crane saw a change of scene. A king sat on his throne. His chin rested upon his hand, and his attitude was one of extreme boredom. A jovial man, he usually accepted events as they came, and smiled. He was wont to laugh heartily, and often. But now the pleasant sound

of his mirth was not heard. He scarcely spoke, and when he did speak, it was to give a brief command in a manner that indicated his wish to have done with whatever was to be done as quickly as possible. Some thought an illness was about to come upon their beloved monarch, and all were deeply concerned.

Suddenly he leaped to his feet, with a strange light in his eyes, and sent an official in search of his favorite general. When this officer appeared before him, he said: "My Aniu, thy king hath a need of rest. He will retire for a time, that he may rid himself of a tiredness which hath come upon him. Unto thee I do give the reins of my kingdom, and thou art to rule as thou wilt until my return. Full confidence hath thy king in thy wisdom and judgment."

Unto the others, he said: "Hear ye! Aniu, my favorite general, shall be thy ruler till I do return. My place shall he take, and unto him shalt thou pay homage, the same as wouldst thou, were he, in very truth, thy king."

Without further delay the good king went into his bed chamber, where he summoned his most trusted servant, to whom he gave an order. Presently the servant returned bringing with him the garb of a peasant. This the king hastly donned.

Then with stern gaze he turned to the servant, and said: "Andrus, as thou livest, I do charge thee to say naught of this to any mortal soul. Tell all who wouldst ask of me that I go to my house in the mountain, and that thou hast been charged by me to see to it that I be not disturbed; that I wish to be alone."

When the servant had left, the king made his exit from his chamber through a side door, and was soon walking down the roadway that led from the palace to the country. Greatly elated was he to find the people whom he met did not recognize him in his peasant's garb. A feeling of freedom possessed him; new life seemed to course through his veins. That night he elected to stay at an inn many miles from his palace. He was comfortably tired; and, as he sat at a table drinking a cup of malt, and listening to the conversation of other guests, he leaned back in the rude chair with evident enjoyment.

The other guests were simple folk, inclined to merriment and much conversation. Seeing the king alone at his table, one approached and said: "Ho, my friend, thou seemest weary and alone. Thou art, mayhap, a stranger here?"

"Yes. 'Tis my first journey this way. Where I hail from matters not; whither bound, I do not know. The traveler's itch have I, and a desire to see much of the country."

"'Tis well, stranger. That is a malady that must afflict all at times. I have but recently been cured of the disease, if thus it may be called."

"And the cure?"

"Aye, the cure. To be sure there must be a cure ere the disease will leave us. Else we must suffer on. Though many may be afflicted by the same malady, not all will heal by taking the same potion. And, too, mayhap one will search the world over for the cure, and find it in a manner most unexpected. Thus it hath been with me."

"The cure, man, the cure!" cried the king in some impatience. Then inwardly he took himself to task because he had almost forgotten the role he now was playing, and he looked at his loquacious friend with an apologetic smile.

"Aye, the cure," repeated the talkative one. "Well, while journeying near here, I met a farmer's lass who was good to look upon. So, said I, here will I tarry for a time to see what's what. And the more I tarried, the more was I inclined to tarry. In a fortnight we will be wed, and having taken to myself a farm as well, I trow I shall no longer desire to travel, but shall be content to play with the new mown hay and feed the geese and ducks. So, as thou seest, that hath been the cure for me. Albeit, I have known the same procedure to cause the malady in another."

The king smiled, though it was somewhat difficult for him to conceal his opinion regarding such a cure. While he was not a hater of the feminine sex, he had discovered but little of interest to him in the damsels he had encountered. To be sure, ambitious mothers and hopeful fathers had taken pains to show off their eligible daughters. But the monarch, who easily perceived the motives behind the many subtle plots and plans, had merely smiled. The ladies were not his weakness. They were admirable to gaze upon, according to his majesty's own admission, but in the manner one would look upon and admire any other beautiful picture. No perturbation had any damsel aroused in his kingly heart.

When the merry-makers had departed, the king called

the inn-keeper and told the man he was ready for his bed. He was guided to a chamber, small but neat and clean. He thought, with a sense of amusement, his lowliest servant was more luxuriously quartered. No one appeared to remove his sandals, nor any to see that he was comfortably arranged in his bed. The novelty of the situation was rather pleasant.

After he had prepared himself for bed, he sat, in the dim and flickering light of the one candle, with his face in his hand. First he reviewed the events of the day. Then he began thinking over the days that had grown more and more boresome up to the hour of his departure from the castle. What could have caused this restlessness? He had all a king could wish. His subjects were loyal; his kingdom was at peace with all the world; he had only to express a wish or a whim to have it complied with instantly. Everything was so easily obtainable. .

Ah! – That must be it. Everything came too easily for him. He had only to nod his head, or to lift a finger, and half a hundred men and women jumped to do his bidding. He need but give the word, and every available man was ready to go forth and battle even unto death, for the king. He should be very proud; for he was powerful. But whence came this power? The throne he had inherited from his uncle. He had added to the dominions and the prosperity of the country. That was true. But he could not shake off the feeling of mockery that came over him when he was surrounded by those who paid him homage and praised his greatness.

Something was strangely missing; this something was

required to make him happy. He wanted none to bow before him merely because he was a king. He wanted something more, but, for the life of him, he could not find out what it was that he required. Well, he would think no more about it now. He would rest, and on the morrow he would continue his adventure.

CHAPTER VIII

King and Peasant

THE KING slept soundly. When he awoke the sun shone full upon him through the lattice-work of the opening which served as a window.

"Andrus, thou blackguard, what aileth thee this morning? Hast thou not informed the household that a new day hath arrived? What excuse hast thou for thy laggardness?"

The door opened, and the inn-keeper said, "Didst thou call, sir? Methought I heardst thee speak."

The king looked about him in surprise. Then awareness of his present situation returned to him, and he said: "I must have been dreaming. I shall be down, presently."

After breaking his fast, he paid the inn-keeper, and once more started out on his quest for adventure. For five days he wandered thus. He became more and more cheerful. The long walks caused him to sleep like an infant; and he sometimes wondered if this comfortably tired feeling at night, caused by his walking, would not ultimately prove to be the cure for his former restlessness. Time would tell. For the present he would continue his journey.

On the sixth day he invaded a wooded valley, where he encountered several shepherds who were holding an excited conversation. By their accent he knew he had crossed the boundary of his own dominion. Joining the group, he inquired as to the cause of their evident excitement.

"Hast thou not heard? Pronious is about to declare war upon us, because of the failure of our king to give the Princess Zuna to be his bride. Our king is unable to keep his promise, for the princess hath disappeared. But Pronious thinks the king hath purposely hidden the princess from him. Who are thou, that hast not heard these things?"

"Who I am, matters not. I am a stranger here. But thou mayest call me Aloysius, a sheepherder. Tell me more."

The sheepmen then told him a tale of the wooing of the princess by the monarch of the adjoining kingdom, an unscrupulous and arrogant fellow, who hoped to profit by an alliance with his neighbor. He had made the demand upon his weaker neighbor in unmistakable terms. The good king's niece and the only heir to the throne, had implored the threatening one to excuse her from the life of a loveless marriage. But to no avail. She was told he was not concerned about her feelings, that she should be only too glad to become the queen of so powerful a monarch; that whether she loved him or not, given a little time, she would find the enjoyment in being his queen.

When her uncle had stated he could not find it in his

heart to sacrifice her, he had been told, if such an alliance were not arranged, he would lose his kingdom. The aggressive monarch stated he was determined to join the two kingdoms together, by peaceful measures, if possible. But, if the princess did not willingly become his wife within the fortnight, he would take both her and the kingdom of her uncle by force.

Aloysius had had dealings with this monarch, and they had not been pleasant ones. When the speaker had finished telling him of the woes that were about to befall this kingdom and its people, this roving king inquired, "And what steps have been taken to defend thy king?"

"There seemeth naught to do. If we fight, we lose, and, if we do not fight, we likewise lose."

"And is that the spirit of all the subjects of thy king? Do they all talk of losing, and none of winning? Hast thy king no real men in his kingdom?"

"Those are brave words, sir. Canst thou with such words, save us?"

"Fie upon such craven utterances! If yon blackguard taketh thy kingdom, peacefully or by war, thou must all become his slaves. I assure thee, death wouldst be far better than such a destiny. How about the king's soldiers?"

"They are but few, and, for the most part, do not dare to fight so formidable an enemy; though there be some who would fight to the death at the command of the king."

"Then let us form another army that will fight!" cried Aloysius. "I here declare myself a soldier, and ready to

fight to the death for the king. Who will follow me?"

Something of the fire and enthusiasm of the speaker's words communicated itself to the simple-minded sheepherders, and filled them with emotions entirely new to them. They were swept off their feet, as it were, as if by a mighty tempest just burst forth. Some spark of martial spirit had been fanned into a flame, and this transformed them at once from simple sheepherders into determined patriots; they were ready to conquer or to die.

"He speaketh words of wisdom," said one. "I will follow him whither he leadeth."

"And I!" quoted all the others.

"Aye," said one of the new patriots, "Let us scour all the country for who will become of the new army."

" 'Tis well," said Aloysius. "Let us select a meeting place. I know the art of soldiering. Let us begin the drilling of the new troops as speedily as possible. From whence doth this arrogant invader come upon us first?"

"To the north, sir, is a gap in the mountains that makes the passage easy."

"And if this were stopped?"

"Then his soldiers must travel for days over the mountains to reach us, to the east and to the south. But on these two sides the entrance is easy."

"We will force him to go around. And by that time we shall see what we shall see. Me thinks 'twill not be so difficult to outwit the blackguard. How many men can ye muster?"

"There are about two hundred in this valley. If all

will heed, as do these, we can enlist many more."

"Procure horses. Send riders in all directions to arouse all to arms. I have plans that may surprise the enemy."

No one stopped to question the leader. At once they seemed to recognize his power. They did not stop to reason that he was only a simple sheepherder like themselves. The sight of him bustling about giving orders in the manner of a trained general, inspired a respect that was akin to awe. Not once did it occur to them to doubt his ability. And there was not time to speculate upon whence he came, or as to why he, a stranger, was bent upon giving the country the much needed assistance.

Within two days a motley band of two thousand men roamed the woods, gathering together such material as they could use in warfare. Short swords, spears, and other weapons were hastily fashioned. Housewives lent every possible assistance; they furnished baskets of food, wearing apparel for the new defenders, and such other articles as they had or could make.

Aloysius himself led a small band of men to the gap that formed a natural gateway to the lands of the little kingdom. The king's soldiers stolidly awaited the inevitable at the palace. No move was made by them to resist the invader.

At the gap, Aloysius commanded his men to roll great stones up the mountain-side; and had them place the rocks in such manner that the least push would tumble them down upon the passageway. Night and day they toiled.

At last the intrepid leader said, " 'Twill do. They will

be caught like rats in a trap. We shall stay here to man the passage. Two will go back to the main body and continue to arouse the farmers and sheepherders. Gather them at the east and the south. There will be work to do, after these braggarts have had their bellies filled with what we have to give them here."

Two days they waited. Then they saw a long line of men entering the valley and heading toward the gap. Aloysius sent a courier to the leader, warning him that the place would be defended to the death; that it would be well for him to retrace his steps.

The invading king indulged in a hoarse laugh, and sent the courier back. All he deigned to say was, "Naughty children must be punished."

Aloysius said, "We have warned them. There is naught for us to do but to mow them down, as a farmer would mow the hay."

At the gap itself Alloysius stationed a few men armed with a half-score throwing machines. These were crude affairs made to throw stones a considerable distance by means of a pole fastened to a windlass-like structure. The pole was weighted at one end with a heavy boulder, and a thong at the upper end held the stone that was to be thrown.

When the first of the invaders approached within firing distance, the order was given to fling the stones. This caused the advancing men to abruptly halt, and gave the next band an opportunity to overtake them. When they thought a sufficient number had gathered, they started to make a rush to overpower the defenders of

the gap. Alyosius gave the command to let loose the stones upon the mountain.

The result was appalling. Not a man of those gathered there was left alive. The enraged leader at once commanded another and larger band to assemble for a second rush. He thought, as the stones had been rolled down, his forces could now enter without further resistance. But he had not counted on the astuteness of Aloysius, who had so arranged his stones of destruction that he could roll down only as many as he deemed necessary at a time. Other stones were left to be precipitated upon those who dared to make a second, or even a third attempt.

The second assault was no less disastrous than the first. A third band was hastily organized, only to meet with the same fate. At least half the invader's army was completely annihilated.

"The ragged braggarts must have carried up all the stones in the valley," fumed the thoroughly disgusted and disappointed monarch. "Well, they shall be taught a lesson they'll not forget. Let them keep their pass. We will withdraw, only to surround them later, where the upstarts cannot throw down their accursed rocks."

News traveled slowly, but the tidings of the quick and ignominious defeat of the besieging king was, to the harassed king, the first ray of light he had seen in many a day. He craved to be told more about the band which so ably had defended him, and about their leader. About all he could glean from his informants was that the men

were led by a strange sheepherder, who had chanced to hear of the danger threatening the kingdom.

But would not the attacker return to mete out terrible punishment upon his unhappy subjects, in revenge for the defeat met with at the pass? His fears and his indecision kept the king in an agony of suspense. And his feelings were communicated to the members of his court, and to the army.

In the meantime, Aloysius was busy. He worked almost without rest, night and day. He was a demon for energy. The example he set, bestirred in his followers their utmost enthusiasm, and called into action all their strength. To the south and to the east, his recruits gathered. And for a month they were kept busy manning a new kind of engine. This device, fashioned under the direction of their ingenious leader, was capable of throwing projectiles twice the distance achievable by the mechanism they had formerly used. Furthermore, it was designed in such manner, fireballs made from pitch could be thrown without injury to the machine.

Ramparts were hastily thrown up, behind which the engines were placed and made ready for action. Then posts were sharpened and planted in the ground, slantwise, with the points facing the direction from which the enemy was expected. In an incredibly short time miles of such posts were imbedded in the earth; then dry brush and leaves were placed among them in such a way they would easily catch fire. Throughout the hours of light and all during the hours of darkness the men worked, and they exulted in their labor. Did not each

new idea advanced by their leader prove to them more and more his amazing resourcefulness?

For many days Aloysius was quartered at a farmhouse, where he was accorded the best of service. The maid who served at the table, he was told, had been there but a fortnight. It was said she had given no information about herself, except that she had no father and no mother, and that a recent trouble had caused her to go out and search for work. At first Aloysius scarcely noticed her. Then he discovered she was often looking at him with unusual interest when she thought he was not noticing. Little by little, he discovered she had about her a sweetness and beauty not common among the farmer maids.

Gradually the two found more and more favor in each other's company, until he was suddenly made aware that he was in love with the lass. Here was a girl without pretensions. As far as she knew, he was only a sheepherder, who, by merest chance, had become a leader of other sheepherders. When the impending battle was over, he would be again just a vagabond sheepherder.

Night after night, when he came in late after the day at the trenches, she would be waiting for him with a cup of hot milk. The two would talk of the time when he would leave the country to return to his own. But why return? Would not the king amply reward him for the great service he was rendering? Would it not be best to remain in the service of the monarch whom he so loyally was defending?

"Fair maiden, I do not know thy king. Nor do I wish

to be rewarded for any service. I shall be content to return to mine own land, unrewarded save for the right to look into thine eyes, as long as we both shall live. Fair one, I love thee. Canst thou love me in return?"

The girl paled and began to tremble violently. "Oh, I had not thought of love! Yet it must be that—I must not talk of love. I must not—I must not!"

"And why not, fair one?" Tell me of thyself. What is it that thou fearest when love is mentioned? I love thee, Zania, and I am sure thou lovest me. Why should we not wed?"

"Oh, speak no more! I must leave thee! Please speak not of love to me."

Puzzled, Aloysius went back to his men to make a last survey before he retired to rest. He was sure the girl loved him. But he could not understand why she was stricken with fear when he endeavored to woo her. It was a strange situation for him. He could have the pick of his kingdom for the asking. This was a novelty to be sure.

The next morning when she waited on the table, she found an opportunity to speak to him alone.

"Aloysius, I have thought carefully over the matter of which thou hast spoken. I do not wish to take from thee any of the courage thou shalt need in the battle that is to come. Yet, I must not lead thee wrong. I wish thee to know that whatever befalls me, I love thee. I have found that I love thee with all my heart and soul. But we can never wed. I must tell thee this, lest thou be misled. I cannot tell thee more. If thou really lovest me,

it must be as I love thee—at a distance and without hope of the fulfilling of that love."

"Fair Zania, the task thou hast set for me is not an easy one. But thy wishes shall be respected. I shall speak no more of love to thee, though my heart is nearly bursting with this love; nor shall I ask thee to tell me of thyself, that which thou hast chosen to conceal. Now that thou hast spoken, I shall abide by thy decision, and shall ask no more but the right to protect thee, e'en though it be to give thee to another to wed. But, before I depart, tell me this. Is there aught that could make conditions different? Could not something occur in thy life that would release thee from whatever bonds, fancied or real, keep thee from me?"

The girl thought long before answering. Then she said: "Yes. Perhaps there might be—after yonder battle hath been fought."

"Ah! Then, after the battle, I shall come to thee to see what may be done. If thou wouldst confide in me, mayhap a way could be found to release thee. I shall talk with thee more—after the battle."

The next few days were passed in much the same way as were the days before. But Aloysius kept his promise and did not speak of love, though he found himself loving the girl much more than he had thought could be possible. Sometimes he wondered if the fact that she was so difficult to win did not make her the more desirable. At any rate, he felt sure that, after the battle, if he won it, he could blast any obstacle that kept her from him. But he wanted to be sure of her. The suspense was

going to make him summon all his will-power to keep him to his promise. Again and again the words of the farmer at the inn, where he had spent his first night away from the palace, came to his mind. Truly, it seemed the cure for restlessness in one, could be the cause of it in another. His restlessness had not troubled him until he had found his loved one was not to be had for the asking. He must work the harder to keep the thing off his mind.

On a hot summer day, one of the many sentries who were posted about the different roadways, came running with the news that the enemy was seen advancing from the east.

As the invaders approached the pointed posts that had been placed for their reception, Aloysius roared out a warning that they should come no further. The depression between the mountains enabled his voice to be heard perfectly by the enemy.

"And who dares to defy the great Pronious?" asked the leader of the besiegers.

"Aloysius, the sheepherder. The same who caused thy downfall at the pass."

At these words the proud monarch was stung into immediate activity. He ordered a charge at once. This time he threw his entire army forward, as if to overwhelm the smaller one by mere numbers.

Aloysius waited until the enemy's soldiers were well entangled in the posts that caused them to curse this new method of warfare. When he was sure they were well within the boundaries of the sharpened poles, he gave

orders for the fireballs to be flung. Almost instantly the dry brush caught fire, and the enemies were enveloped by the flames. But few escaped to surround their king.

Quickly Aloysius, with a few chosen ones, made his way to where the astounded monarch sat upon his horse. He had given the command that the king was to be left for him to deal with. Soon the conflict was hand to hand, Aloysius singling out the king for battle. The meeting was of short duration. A terrific blow hurled the king to the ground, where he was bound hand and foot and taken within the lines of the defenders.

The captured monarch straightway was taken by Aloysius and his men to the palace. The amazed king ordered that his erstwhile foe be taken away and held until sent for by himself.

Turning to Aloysius, the king said: "And we owe all this to thee. Thou hast conquered a mighty kingdom with a band of peasants without losing a man, while my brave soldiers waited at the palace to deliver themselves to the invader. Is it true that the enemy's entire army hath been killed?"

"Yes, your Majesty. Not a man hath remained, except the few who were captured with their king."

" 'Tis most strange. And very opportune. Thou shalt be rewarded. Name thy reward, stranger, and it shall be given thee, e'en though it be half my kingdom."

"Very well, your Majesty. I trust the boon I would ask shall not be irksome. I ask, first of all, that these men who followed me be rewarded according to their merit. They made the victory possible. Then I ask thee

to accept as a small token of my friendship, the kingdom of Pronious, to be added to thine own. He hath rightfully forfeited it, by reason of his evil intent upon thee and thy domains. If thou dost grant me the favor I have asked, I shall be content."

"What manner of man is this? He taketh a kingdom and passeth it on to another, as if 'twere a matter of frequent occurrence. Dost ask nothing for thyself?"

"Nothing more than I have asked. And it pleaseth thee, I would be gone. I have business elsewhere."

"As thou wilt. But I ask of thee to let this not be a final parting. I would speak with thee again."

"Thou shalt hear of me anon. But for the present a pressing matter awaiteth my attention. Farewell."

Thus Aloysius, with these few words, passed out of the palace and hurriedly betook himself to the farmhouse, and to Zania.

There was much speculation among the king's retinue, regarding this mysterious stranger. One said: "Didst note that at times he scarce spoke to the king as though he were a mere peasant? And yet, it seemeth his speech was not boorish. At times he spoke as if he, too, were king, and as one who speaketh to an equal."

"Mayhap this victory hath turned his head. Didst note he did ask for no reward for himself?" said another.

In the meantime, Aloysius arrived at the farmhouse, only to learn Zania had as mysteriously disappeared as she had come. Not a trace of her could be found. Aloysius frantically called on several of his friends to assist him in the search. Days passed, but nothing could he

learn of her whereabouts. Had she been foully dealt with? He recalled she had been possessed by a terrible fear when he talked to her of love. He could neither eat nor sleep sufficiently for thinking of her.

Then, as he was preparing to spend another sleepless night, he sat with his head bowed, as if he were trying to fathom why this thing should have come upon him. Just as happiness had been about to come to him, it had eluded him most successfully. He was sure he would not find Zania so difficult to win, now that the country had been saved. What had he done to deserve a fate so unhappy?

Suddenly there passed through his mind a picture, hazy at first, but gradually it became clearer, until he saw, as if some sleeping memory had been awakened, a man giving up his life at a small seepage that an antelope, which was almost dying of thirst, might be saved. He saw the man being led, when the agony was over, by an older man, who said, as they passed on to other realms, "Thy sacrifice is only seeming, as thou shalt later know." Looking at the body that had been left behind, he saw it was a counterpart of his own. What could this mean?

Feeling the presence of another in the room, he looked up to see the same man who had led him away at the mountain-side, watching him with friendly eyes.

"My son, thy present trial is only seeming. In thy imaginings, great suffering hath come upon thee. But 'tis not so. All is well with thee. . . In thine ignorance of that which is true, thou hast dwelt too much at length on that which is not true."

"Dost thou mean, O reverend sir, that I shall find my love?"

"When thou seest an antelope drinking at a spring on the morrow, follow it."

So saying, the visitor was gone; and the picture slowly faded from view. Aloysius then lay himself down and slept the first sleep of peace he had experienced since his discovery of his loss.

CHAPTER IX

From Peasantry to Royalty

THE NEXT MORNING at dawn he was on his way. Still wondering over the strange visitor of the night before, he was about to sit down to rest and think over the situation once more, in order to try to more thoroughly grasp its significance, when he heard the tinkle of a tiny bell. He followed the direction of the sound, and soon was looking at a small, half-grown antelope, which was drinking from a little running spring.

The little animal looked up in an interested but fearless way, and started gravely off. To his astonishment, he discovered that he was within a very short distance of the Royal palace. The fawn stopped at a side entrance at the rear of the castle grounds, where it stood as if expecting someone to let it in. The tiny bell at its collar made its tinkling sound each time the creature moved its head.

Presently a maid opened the gate, and, seeing Aloysius approach, she asked him if he sought to enter the castle. Almost without volition on his part, he heard himself saying he did, that he wished an audience with the king. Then he asked how the fawn came to be so gentle. The maid told him it was the pet of the princess, that it was allowed to go out whenever it chose to do so, but that

it always came back when it had finished its airing. The tinkle of the bell at its collar was the signal of its return.

He was led to a sentinel, who immediately recognized him as the leader of the shepherd army.

"Thou comest in good time, sir. The king hath tried to find thee these last few days, on a matter of importance. Please follow me, sir."

When he had reached the presence of the king, the monarch said, "Aloysius, thou hast led us a merry chase. Since my niece, the princess, hath been found, we have spared none in the search for thee."

A bell was rung and a servant was sent for the princess, who quickly arrived. The king took her by the hand and spoke to her in a benign voice.

"My child, this is he whom thou hast sent for."

Aloysius stared at her in speechless amazement, for in her he saw the peasant girl with whom he was in love, and for whom he had searched in vain!

She smiled upon him sweetly, and said, "Now, Aloysius, thou seest what thy victory hath cost thee. Hadst thou been defeated, I should have lost our throne. Then we might have wed, hadst thou lived. But our laws demand that the ruler or successor to a throne may not wed except to one of royal blood, on pain of death. I have told my uncle all, but there is no way to escape the law. I wished to find thee to let thee know, whatever befalleth me I shall love thee always, e'en as I have already told thee. But, as thou seest, we cannot wed."

When she had finished, the tears fell from her long lashes down upon her cheeks.

"Dear lady, little did I dream thou and the lost princess were one," said Aloysius; then he added in an unperturbed voice, "But though thou canst not wed with one not of royal blood, I rejoice that thou hast been restored to thine uncle."

"I was in hiding, for I thought Pronious wouldst find an easy victory; and to have lived to be his bride, I would not. But when so ably thou didst put an end to that danger, I was free to return to the palace."

"Fair princess, I have a message for his majesty, the king, and it shall please thee. For the moment I bid thee farewell."

Turning to the king, Aloysius spoke to him in a low tone, and departed.

Within a week, Princess Zuna, having occasion to look from out her window, saw a magnificent retinue approaching the palace. She hastened to the throne room, where she found the king, who, with a twinkle in his eye, bade her be seated beside him.

Soon a courier entered and after making obeisance to the king and the princess, said: "His Majesty, King Aloysius, sends his greetings to His Majesty and to Her Royal Highness, and begs to be announced as a visitor."

"Take to King Aloysius our greetings, and say that none is more welcome."

"King Aloysius? What doth this mean, my uncle?"

At this moment there was a blast of a trumpet, and Aloysius was announced—not as Aloysius, the leader of the shepherd army, but as Aloysius, the King. The be-

wildered princess could only stare, as Aloysius approached and stood before her smiling at her discomfiture.

He smiled at the king and said: "Fair princess, thou gavest me a start when the peasant girl, with whom I fell in love, became a princess. And now I perceive thou, too, hast been surprised. I trust that henceforth all differences that would prevent our being wed shall have vanished."

On all sides exclamations could be heard. "What a king!". . . "What a man!" . . . "What a fine soldier hath been lost when he became a king!" . . .

After the usual formalities of the court had been observed, the two monarchs and the princess retired to the king's private chamber. Then said the king to the princess:

"My child, King Aloysius no doubt hath something to say to thee. If I may be excused, I shall attend some matters that require my attention for a little time. 'Till then, peace be with thee."

"Well, thy Royal Highness?" said Aloysius.

"Yes, thy Majesty."

"Not thy Majesty—just thy Aloysius. Let us walk in the garden. I have need for greater room for this constantly expanding happiness. As plain Zania thou wert entrancing, but as the Princess Zuna thou art irresistible."

In the garden, the odor of many flowers, subdued music coming from hidden performers, the gentle breeze that caressed with sweet, soft touches, as if some ethereal unseen hand wished to bestow its benediction upon the lovers. . . All this lingered in the memory of Crane long after his vision had vanished; and he thought of the

lines written by a later poet: "'Till twilight came, and lovers walked and wooed in a forgotten language; and old tunes, from instruments of unremembered forms, gave the soft winds a voice."

As they sat down upon a garden seat, the antelope, with its tinkling bell, came bounding toward them. But, instead of going to its mistress, as was its wont, it went directly to Aloysius and laid its muzzle in the palm of his outstretched hand. The princess looked on in surprise.

"'Tis strange!" she exclaimed. "Heretofore it hath not deigned to permit itself to be caressed by any but its mistress, and yet the first time it seest thee, it cometh to thee as if to a long acquaintance."

"This is not the first glimpse it hath had of me, fair princess."

Aloysius now described the first time he had seen the fawn, and told of how he had followed it to the palace in his search for her.

The little animal had now lain down beside its mistress, as though content with the world.

Long the lovers talked as only lovers can talk. At length Aloysius said: "Sweet Zuna, let us inform the king that it doth be our desire to wed as soon as the conventions will permit."

"As thou wilt, Aloysius. Sometimes I fear I shall awake and find it all a dream. So filled am I with happiness, I am fairly dazed."

When the king had been informed of the desire of the lovers, he called together the officials of the court, and said: "Hear ye, the Princess Zuna is to wed with the

King Aloysius. See that all due preparations be made for a betrothal as befits the union of three kingdoms. Never before, during the history of our land, hath there been so momentous an occasion."

And truly there had not been before such excitement as prevailed throughout many days after this announcement. Even the subjects of the deposed Pronious were made glad, for they had found their previous king a merciless despot who had ruled by fear alone. Only those nearest him, or those who were like him in nature, had not suffered from his despotic reign. For days there was great rejoicing and festivity.

The royal wedding took place within the time prescribed for such occasions. And when the elaborate ceremony was over, the good king spoke to those present at length.

The virtues of the bridegroom he extolled in more than glowing terms. In part he said: "Hath e'er a man been known before, who hath journeyed into a strange country alone and by his own greatness conquered a formidable foe, as hath this royal husband of thy Princess, now made thy Queen. I say thy Queen, for I have here prepared my scroll of abdication. I am growing old. It is time for the reins of government to be taken over by younger and more capable hands. Therefore, hear ye all, I, thy King, retire from active service, to hand over to King Aloysius and thy Queen, the affairs of State. And who could better reign?"

When the oration had been concluded, a great silence pervaded the place. All had loved their king. But the

prospect of being ruled by so great a ruler as Aloysius far outweighed the shade of sadness that was but natural to those who loved their aging monarch.

Naturally, Aloysius and Zuna were taken by surprise. During their courtship and betrothal they had given little thought to affairs of state. And who would, under such conditions? The old king now made a sign for the bridal pair to come forward. Before him they knelt to receive his blessing. When they arose, the abdicating monarch led them to the throne, where, after placing his hands over their united ones, he bade them be seated. He then retired from the throne room.

Aloysius smiled to himself as he again remembered the words of the farmer guest at the inn on his first day away from his palace. Truly he had now found the cure.

All through the days that followed, and through those that followed the day of the coronation, which took place twenty-eight days after the wedding ceremony, Aloysius hardly sensed the passing of time. So much happiness had come to him that all events seemed to him more like parts of a dream than realities. He and his queen had been constantly together, day and night; he had had no inclination to be alone for a single instant.

But one morning his queen told him she had some business with her dressmakers; and he was left alone for almost three quarters of the day. After attending to some affairs of state – usually those things were attended to while the queen was present – he sauntered out into the garden, where he sat himself down on the seat where he and the queen had spent many happy

hours. He gave himself up to reflection. He dwelt at length on his great happiness, and upon the events that had led up to it, not forgetting the elderly man who had so mysteriously appeared to him.

A feeling of deep reverence came over him, and he asked himself if he had deserved so much. He also asked himself how it would be possible for him to make himself more worthy of all that had come to him. At that moment he felt there was someone near him, and looked up to see his elderly friend standing before him.

"My son, thy reflection hath brought thee a visitor once again. Before it was because of thy misery, and now it is because of thy happiness. As thou wert admonished, thy misery was brought on by thine own thinking; the cause of it was only seeming. Now that thou hast found that which is real, thou hast cast aside that which was real only in thine imaginings."

"I pray thee, good sir, to tell me if it be possible for this great happiness also to be the result of an imagined cause. Happiness overflowingly fills me. I fear I may awaken and it be taken from me. Can the imaginings not lean the one way as well as the other way?"

"Nay, not so. That which is of unhappiness is of short duration, because of the nature of it. Man was not meant to be unhappy; all the unhappiness that cometh to him is of his own making. But happiness is his goal. Whate'er may be his life or his task through which he is to learn, his happiness will be of longer duration; though the length of it will depend upon how well he hath learned."

"And canst thou not grant me the power to so learn that this great happiness shall not fade away from me and my people?"

"No one can grant thee such power except thyself. Thou hast naught to fear; thy conduct hath brought to thee all thou art enjoying. Continued happiness is in store for thee. Thou hast remembered something of thy past; thou hast learned no sacrifice for another can fail to bring just compensation to him who so sacrifices."

"Thou meanest the antelope on the desert? But I, or who I was then, did not know death was so near at hand. It was supposed more water would have come."

"True. But thou didst sacrifice the opportunity to slake thine own thirst by great effort, for thou wert already famished. The sacrifice was a heroic one, and one that shall bear fruit for thee all through thine existence henceforth. Thy present life shall be filled with blessings for thee and thy people."

"And when this life be over?"

"After this life there will be many other lives; and each will be different from all the others, in order that thou mayest at some time attain to greater heights. Thee and thy people will be separated, to be reunited in a manner different than thou now dreamest could be possible."

"And will my people know of this, that they, too, may enjoy this reunion?"

"Aye. They will know it e'en before thou wilt. Owing to the nature of the matter, thou must lose all memory of this life for a time; though thy people will attain the

power to awaken that memory, and will remember all before thou dost, that due preparation may be made for thy return to them."

"'Tis most strange! And will there be no sign during these lives that are to come, as to what hath taken place, or as to what will occur?"

"When an antelope doth spring from the side of a maiden, and doth place its muzzle in thy palm, the hour approacheth when the veil that hideth the past from thee, will begin to draw aside, until little by little that which thou shouldst remember will be revealed. Then thou wilt stand as the others do, with full remembrance of all thy past lessons; and after, nothing ever again will cause thee sorrow; thy every wish will be fulfilled."

"It hath been said by the seers: 'Those who rule will later be ruled.' Doth this mean always a king must return to be a subject?"

"Again this dependeth upon the conduct of such an one. If he hath wisely ruled, he will carry with him something of that rulership into all other happenings. There will be something which will single him out as not of the ordinary."

"And hast thou no further admonitions for me? I would fain be guided by thy wisdom."

"Thou shalt be guided by thine own wisdom."

"If I am not too bold, may I ask who art thou?"

"None who in true humility doth reflect upon the events which befall him, and doth ask for guidance, shall fail, through his meditations, to receive aught which is necessary for him to know. The knowledge may come

in different ways. In thine own case, he whom thou now beholdest hath come to thee in answer to thine unspoken meditations. He will continue to watch over thy footsteps, and when cometh time of need he will be at hand. E'en so, it is still thine own wisdom which guideth thee, for it is through thine own wisdom that he who is guard over thee is summoned. And now farewell for a time. Peace be with thee."

Again Aloysius was alone. He closed his eyes for a moment in deep thought. Feeling his cheek burning, as though a fire were near, he opened his eyes, to find himself upon the grass. The sun had reached a point where it shone down through an opening among the leaves, and some of its rays danced upon his cheek. The palace had disappeared; and once again Crane looked about him. His feeling was that he had passed ages and ages in a far-off land, and it did not seem possible that he still lived in the same day on which he had lain down to meditate in the earlier morning.

Long he pondered over what he had learned. So he had once been a king in a land of long ago! He had felt something of the kind, but had been unable to get a clear conception of what he sensed. Now that this glimpse of the past had been his, many impressions that had come to his mind, sometimes vague, sometimes quite pronounced, were explained. His sensations as he contemplated these awakened memories were almost painful. He could still feel the great love for his queen. Would he see her again? If so, when? He had never loved a woman in this life, and he wondered if this love of yore

was the reason. Had his heart been untouched in that regard because he had not contacted his loved one?

Ah! Now he could feel the stirring of a love that might possibly consume him. Could he but see that fair face and form, he knew he would feel the old love surge up within him. When would he see her? And would she recognize him? Again the sensation of a great happiness, not unmixed with pain—the pain of impatience—possessed him. He must exercise his self control. He would put the matter out of his mind as much as possible. It would not do to let these emotions dominate him to the exclusion of other things he had to learn.

A slight rustle at his side caused him to look up; and at sight of the antelope approaching, he said: "Well, old fellow, it seems we are about to know things. I wish I knew how much you know."

The graceful animal walked up to him, and laid its muzzle in his palm, just as it had the first time Crane saw it. A strange fancy passed through his mind. If it could speak, it could tell much. Was there something between himself and this species of animal kingdom, the origin of which had been even before his experience in those primitive times, when he had saved a young antelope from slaughter by a fellow of his own kind? What was the mystery? Why the particular method of approach? And how was it that all antelopes which approached him employed the same method? Perhaps he would know at some time. In the meantime, it seemed portentous knowledge was about to come to him.

The thought gave him a feeling of pleasurable anticipation that was akin to ecstacy. How his little world had changed since he had started on his strange quest. His search had been rewarded far beyond his dreams! If only he could find someone to whom he could express his gratitude. While he was thinking, he stroked the back of his four-footed companion.

He arose and followed the winding of the brook. The antelope walked closely behind him. Frequently he found it necessary to bend low in order to walk under the vine-covered branches of some of the trees he passed. On one of these occasions, upon raising his head, he came face to face with a huge hornet's nest. He knew this vicious insect under ordinary circumstances would immediately attack any intruder upon the privacy of its domains. But something seemed to tell him he need not fear. For some moments he stood there contemplating the little fellows as they went about their work in their business-like way, taking no notice of his presence other than the liftings of their heads now and then, as if to ascertain if he were still there. When he walked away not a single hornet followed him.

Again he felt the particular thrill which came over him now more and more often. He could not have described the feeling in the crude language of mere words. It was something like a wave of complete harmony and well-being. It enveloped and permeated the very Soul until the Ego itself ceased to be something separate, but became blended with a grand symphonic whole; so that even the physical body took upon itself an ethereal light-

ness, which lifted it out of the grosser regions of things objective, until it also became as nothing.

Again he sat down to rest and to think. How different was this valley from the rest of the world he knew! Here there was nothing but peace and harmony; not a single creature preyed upon another; every living thing, from animal to insect, carried on its activities as if each individual knew its relation to all the others that made up the whole. Would all the world some day experience this sublime harmony and utter lack of selfishness? He felt this must be so. This miniature paradise was a forerunner of the future state of the entire earth; there must be other spots such as this, and they would become more and more numerous. At last only gladness and peace would be. He yearned to assist in the more rapid bringing about of the glorious day when all living things could feel the tranquility he now experienced.

A dove flew down and alighted upon his shoulder. Then the sweet, soft vibrations of its cooing notes fell upon his ear, blending with the lengthening shadows as they merged into the soothing twilight and quietly told of the coming of reposeful night. When the dove had finished its song, it preened itself for a moment, then flew away. And Crane once more arose to make his way to his quarters.

At moments he felt only an hour or two could have elapsed since he had started out; then again, he felt he had lived through years. What lessons he had learned! If it were possible for him to pass on to others even a fragment of his experiences of the Soul—and the promises

of blessings to come he had glimpsed—would it not revive hopes that had waned, or strengthen those maintained? His heart fairly ached to share this state of blessedness with his less fortunate earthly brothers.

Soon he was in his chamber. He had left the door open, and the antelope walked in and curled itself up on a rug, as though it were accustomed to making itself at home. Crane caressed it lovingly with his eyes, then went to refresh himself in his bath. That night he left the door of his room open so as to allow the antelope to go and come as it pleased.

Before he retired to rest, he fell upon his knees at the side of his bed, and gave deeply reverent thanks to God for all that had come to him. His body tingled with the vibrations of the invocation that poured from the depths of his being, until it seemed as if he would be raised up from his position. How long he knelt he did not know. He had no recollection of going to bed.

Hearing tiny footfalls on the floor, he opened his eyes, and saw the antelope walking, with what he took to be an inquiring manner, toward the bed. The sun had risen. He must have slept soundly, for he remembered not a dream. Since the previous morning he had not eaten, but he had been unbothered by pangs of hunger. After he had had his bath, he thought of how long it had been since he had partaken of nourishment. Nor was he hungry even now. Yet he would enjoy food.

After breakfast was over, Nona told him they would again go out to learn more of Nature's secrets. This

pleased him much, though he had expected her to tell him just that.

To his surprise she led the way past the place where he had rested the day before, and where wonderful experiences had been his. As they passed the spot, she looked at him and smiled, though in her expression he thought he detected a little of the awe he had seen upon her face before.

He said to her, "You know all about it then?"

"The things you have remembered have been known to the Brotherhood for some time."

"Are there yet many things to remember?"

"Many more."

"Is there a reason why I should not remember all at once, instead of only the three episodes which revealed themselves to me?"

"You could scarcely have endured such an experience. You will remember your sensations after you had seen what you saw."

"True. They were overpowering. But one thing has not yet made itself clear. When I tried to fathom the mystery of there being no children here, nor any cemeteries, I came to the conclusion the members of the Brotherhood had evolved beyond the need of sexual relationships. But, since my experience of yesterday, I deduce I have been mistaken."

"In one way you were right, but in another, wrong. It is true there is no need for the physical relations of the sexes in the experiences of the developed soul. But the time never comes when there is not the need of the

one sex for the other, not even on the higher planes of existence, until the two have merged into the source from which they proceeded, and have in truth become one."

"Is that the reason so much is said of the Masters as men, and so little of them as women?"

"There are many women Masters, but when the perfect union has taken place, all differences of sex have been discarded. Some term being necessary to express the relativity of the Advanced Ones to all other persons and things, the masculine pronoun has naturally predominated. Furthermore, there is a change in the polarity of the Great Ones. This will be more thoroughly explained to you later."

Swiftly they passed out of the little valley, and over the great, rough floor made by the once molten lava. Now they entered a much larger and deeper depression, whose walls were immense masses of solid rock that cast perpetual shadows into the depths below.

CHAPTER X

A Glimpse Below the Surface

NONA AND CRANE picked their way down the steep incline that led to the bottom of the shaded valley. He noticed the darkness increased to an extent it seemed to him could not be due entirely to the shutting off of the sun's rays by the high walls of rock and the leaves of the vegetation lower down. Without hesitation, after they arrived at the bottom, the girl led the way into what at first appeared to be a depression in the rock, but which proved to be an entrance into a subterranean passage.

Inside the passage the way was dimly lighted by the same phosphorescence that had enabled them to see on his first journey from the valley of the Brotherhood toward Mount Lassen along the roofed roadway. Unlike the others through which they had passed, this passage was not formed of lava, but was a tunnel through solid rock, and bore a great similarity to the many tunnels he had seen in mines. From its appearance, though, he could not tell whether the hands of man had fashioned it, or whether it was due to another of Nature's queer pranks.

After much wandering and turning of corners, they came to a perpendicular shaft, around which wound an

upward leading spiral stairway. The way upward was much longer than had been their passage downward into the valley. It was plain that no ordinary individual, under the ordinary conditions of the outside world, could have climbed those stairs without great effort and much time. But Crane did not feel, when they paused at the top, that he had undergone any great exertion; his breathing was as though he had been walking on level ground, and his pulse was normal.

At the top of the stairway was a door, upon which Nona knocked three times. It appeared to open of its own accord; and Crane now saw what appeared to be a combination of laboratory and observatory. Telescopes, microscopes, spectroscopes, many delicate devices the like of which he had never before seen, and chemicals of various sorts, were there in abundance. When one looked out from one of the windows, it could be seen that this observatory was located on the peak of one of the highest mountains, for the view covered all the surrounding country.

"What a view!" exclaimed Crane.

"Yes. The windows, as you will see, are so arranged one may look in any direction."

"I gather this place is used exclusively for scientific research."

"True. Here discoveries are made, which, in their proper time, will be passed on to the world."

"How may this be done if none ever enters here from the outer world?"

"Mayhap the knowledge which contains the answer to your query—something you already know—will be more firmly impressed upon your mind, if it be said it is not needful for any to enter here in order to contact this wisdom. The inventor of a device or the discoverer of something new is not the originator of an invention or discovery. He is one who receives certain ideas from the minds of others. These ideas added to his own create the necessary impulse which results in action.

"Thus, when the time is ripe for a change or for advancement along any particular line, thought waves sent out from different sources and directions, center themselves upon the minds of certain individuals who are attuned to the same kinds of thought waves, until the products of these thoughts are manifested in the physical world. This explains why two or more individuals, who live in different parts of the world, produce the same invention simultaneously. The moment a discovery is made here, the result is sent forth to all the world; and, if the time be ripe, one or more receptive persons are contacted. The inventor, through whom the new invention is given to humanity, usually believes he has done it all himself."

"Wonderful! Here are people working for humanity, without reward, without even recognition. I have long wished I might come in contact with people of this nature—but I had no idea a place of this kind really existed in the world of matter."

A door opened, and there entered a man whose face was one of the kindest Crane had ever seen. He smiled

at both his visitors, a salutation that seemed sufficient without words.

"Well, Nona, so the expected visitor has arrived. How wonderful is the fulfillment of the law!"

At this Crane looked blank. There was more for him to learn about himself and his advent here. But he sensed he would learn as quickly if he asked nothing.

"Would you like to look over our little place up here?"

"Yes, indeed."

Various telescopes were inspected and their different scopes were explained. One very large telescope was mounted upon a frame where it could be adjusted by means of hand screws to the merest fraction of an inch in any direction. This instrument, Crane was told, although smaller than many of the large telescopes in the outer world, was much more powerful than any heretofore used by man. At night, stars and planets of which the world had not yet dreamed, were made visible through this mighty instrument.

In another chamber Crane was shown something which almost took his breath away, so stupendous was its import. Here was another telescope, larger than the largest he had seen in the first chamber, but it was equipped with a different mechanism. *Instead of pointing upward, it was pointing downward!*

"Now if you will mount the platform—"

Crane obeyed the request. He observed, as he looked down through the instrument, that the side of it was open, and that the sun shone directly upon a reflector which was situated at a point on one side of the opening.

This reflected the sun's rays upon still another reflector within the opening; and still another carried the reflected light downward. Thus he saw a sight that made him gasp.

He was looking directly into the earth itself!

As his host worked the delicate mechanism, Crane was enabled to explore stratum after stratum of the earth's crust, as easily as if all were upon the surface and exposed to the daylight. He was surprised to see the many variations in the same stratum. In one place he saw a pool of oil; in another, at the same level, he saw a coal bed; and at still another, a stringer of gold and silver. The multiplicity of formations in the same stratum increased with the distance reached by the vision, which the instrument afforded.

As the telescope was focused to penetrate into deeper strata, greater wonders were beheld. Imbedded in rock, in a petrified state, were the fossil bones of prehistoric animals. Never had Crane read or heard of any like them. Great pools of oil, as yet untouched by the tools of men, were confined under the terrific pressure of thousands of feet of earth and rock; and they rested as calmly as if they contained not the awful force they could exert were their contents released. In other places, pools and streams of dark liquid bubbled and surged constantly, in their apparent efforts to exhaust themselves all at once through the small openings made by the drills of man. Much more was made visible by the aid of this mighty instrument. All cannot be recorded here for lack of time and space.

Turning from the telescope, Crane said, "This marvelous instrument has given me revelations that are almost too much for a man's mind to grasp. It is well nigh unbelievable that this tremendous wealth is still left in the earth. Why, not even the surface of it has been scratched!"

A serene smile illuminated the countenance of the Brother, who, after a thoughtful pause, made the answer: "That which you have seen is as nothing compared with what is yet to be seen. The instrument is focused upon a point that reaches not more than five thousand feet below the surface. By turning this wheel we can make it explore a much greater depth. There – This, as you will see by the registering device, is ten thousand feet."

Again Crane was astounded. While his host moved other wheels and levers, the telescope disclosed to view in the underlying strata much that was to be seen nearer the surface. But on a more prodigal scale. Oil, coal beds, minerals—a wealth inconceivable—were so profusely revealed as to bewilder the mind.

"Why, wealth we have been accustomed to looking upon as colossal is utterly trivial in comparison with the undiscovered resources. I presume all this will some day be discovered and utilized?"

"All things that are hidden will some day be revealed. But the things you observe will be used in ways different from those now in vogue. The term, wealth, will have an entirely different meaning."

"I think I grasp what you mean. The time will come when this wealth will not be necessary, as it is now being

used. For instance, oil and coal will not be used as fuel. Gold and silver will not be used as mediums of exchange in commerce, and so on."

"Yes. The entire commercial system is to be changed. Power will be generated without the aid of fuel, and competition, as it is now known, will cease to be."

"Ah, that is a matter in which I am intensely interested," said Crane. "But first, if these vast resources which underlie the surface of the earth are not used, of what value are they, and why did nature place them there?"

"They will be used. It was stated, oil and coal will not be used as fuel, but there are other uses for them. Gold and silver will cease to be used as mediums of exchange, but they will be employed in much more important ways."

"How will they ever be reached at these great depths? Then how can the difficulties in the way of bringing them to the surface be overcome?"

"In the first place, there is not anything in the physical world that man is not destined to conquer. In the second place, much of what you have seen will be brought nearer the surface by upheavals and convulsions from time to time." His gaze turned from Crane to the great telescope. "Of course, only a comparatively small portion of what is forced close to the surface will be found and utilized, until man has found a better means of locating these treasures than he has now."

"Is it possible man will some day use an instrument such as this one for that purpose?"

"Why not? Already steps have been taken in that regard. Sooner or later, the inevitable will occur."

"You spoke a moment ago of the end of competition. Would not such discoveries assist in ushering in the era you anticipate?"

"But surely. There would be so much of these products their present values would be tremendously decreased. It is a natural law that competition over the obtaining of a given commodity decreases with a decrease in the value of the commodity."

"But would not this bring on a crisis of some kind in the affairs of man?"

"There is always what is known as a crisis when any great change occurs. Yet the process may be so gradual that there need be no cause for serious alarm."

"Returning again to the subject of competition, will there not be a backward swing in the pendulum of human progress for a time, when competition has been eliminated? Is not competition one of the basic laws of human progress?"

"Competition, as we know it, was necessary for a time. However, when the human consciousness will have evolved to a higher degree, there will be no further need for such competition. There will be a decrease in the desire for individual advancement, and an increase in the desire for the advancement of the race as a whole."

"Coming back to what we have been observing," said Crane, indicating the telescope, "is it possible to focus this instrument so that even greater depths may be penetrated?"

"Yes. It is possible to see for several miles into the earth."

"Now, tell me this, if, in your great advancement, you have been able to tell, through your own inner powers, exactly what the formation of the earth is, why is it necessary to have an instrument like this?"

"Although it is possible for the adept to know many things through non-physical means, he knows man as a whole must first conquer the physical; not before then can he properly convey his knowledge to those not as evolved. It is a matter of history that much which was later confirmed by physical means, was passed to man by those who had this super-physical knowledge."

"I noticed, while looking through the telescope, the great deposits of fire, some of which had found their way to the surface by means of volcanoes, were local; that they did not come from the earth's interior, as many scientists have advocated. What may be said with regard to the center itself? Is it a source of greater heat than these localized masses of fire?"

Not once did the learned man hesitate in his answers. It was as if there were no limit to his store of knowledge.

"It is rather a source of energy," he said in reply to Crane's last query. "Under certain conditions it manifests heat, but it is not a molten mass, as it is believed by some to be. Nor is the center itself solid, as is believed by others. While it is true temperature increases with depth, a point may be reached when the temperature does not increase, excepting, of course, at the localized places you have

seen. A full explanation will be given you, later, as to the exact formation of this center."

"I have sometimes, in reverie, dreamed of some powerful concern digging a tunnel into the interior of the earth," said Crane in a meditative tone. "I visioned it as affording a new means of diversion, as well as providing a new source of profit to be derived from the deposits of oil and minerals. I have discarded these dreams as fantastic, but they return to my mind with more or less persistence."

"You have contacted the thought waves of one who is now making plans to do that very thing. He is a man with an over-abundance of capital, and with the means to invest his money in that way. If he carries out his plan, he will provide work for many laborers, and at the same time will reap much for his venture. As you have observed, the huge pipe lines will carry the oil out alongside the roadbed on which passengers will travel through this wonderland of the interior. This roadbed will cross underground rivers and deep ravines, or will pierce through some great lake, whose waters will be tunneled off, to insure the safety of the passengers. The tunnels will be provided with non-breakable glass, made to withstand the terrific pressure, through which may be seen much of what you have observed through the telescope. But greater than the rest of the result, will be the scientific value of such an enterprise. Through the use of instruments, such as this one, and others of a similar nature, engineers will know how to avoid the dangerous

or impassable places, such as the immense caverns you have seen."

"And this project will actually be accomplished some day?" queried Crane.

"Most assuredly. Even now there is being invented a machine that will bore a tunnel into the earth, no matter what the formation may be, as easily as a gimlet will bore into a piece of soft wood. It will be less difficult than it may seem now."

"You speak of immense caverns. While I was looking through the telescope, I noticed some that were of great extent, as though what had formerly filled them had in some way been removed. Is it possible that caverns of that size may be formed, through the taking of immense quantities of oil to the surface, as has been done during the past several years?"

"Some were partly formed in that way, but not entirely. Some of these oil reservoirs were caverns before the oil was released to the surface. Submerged deposits of animal matter, through pressure and chemical reaction, were converted into oil, which caused, in time, a natural shrinkage in that locality, though, as you have seen, there are caverns where there is no oil. These were caused by the shrinkage of the earth's surface, – a process which is, at all times, taking place in some parts; then, at other times, the earth is heaved up."

"It looks very much as though a severe earthquake might cave in one of these caverns, and thus destroy almost an entire continent," ventured Crane. "Some of those caverns seem to be very large indeed."

"Truly, that has occurred more than once. Occasionaly great bodies of land have gone down in this way, to be submerged by inflowing waters."

"This seems to be an exclusively physical proposition. The earth shrinks, voids are formed through this shrinkage, and thus the way is left for the upper part to fall in when an earthquake takes place, such as may have formed the caverns in the first place. Is this not so?"

"I should not have stated it just that way –"

"What I am trying to express is that I understand the inhabitants of a region bring on the destruction of that region through their destructive tendencies." Crane looked at his host as if for corroboration, then continued, "In other words, we are led to believe the vices of humanity will bring, at some time or another, calamities that will destroy even the land. The way you have explained the natural activities of the earth seems to preclude this idea."

"It does not preclude it. However, all things do function in a natural manner and according to natural law. There exists in the universe not one atom that does not bear a relation to every other atom. The activities of one atom influence, to an extent, the activities of every other atom. And you already know, mind exists in all matter, even in so-called inanimate matter. You also know both matter and mind are rates of vibration, and that all lower rates of vibration are subject to any higher rate. Mind in operation is the highest rate. All other rates, therefore, are subject to reformation or disintegration by the vibrations of thought, which is mind in operation.

Thought may be destructive as well as constructive. If a nation reaches a stage when the minds of people—that is the preponderance of thought – are centered on things of vice, the thought waves penetrate even into the interior of the earth, and thus change the rate of vibration of each minute particle of earth matter in that locality, until a crystallization sets in, which causes the earth matter to, eventually, fall apart. Thus, even the topography of a continent may be changed by the thought waves of many minds, or a continent may be thus caused to disappear entirely."

Crane nodded his head thoughtfully. "It is said all things work for the greatest good of the majority; that the law of compensation so works. This being the case, how does the influence of the combined thought forces of a race, and the result, affect the rest of the earth and its inhabitants?"

"They are affected in various ways. Every destructive thought lodges in the minds of those individuals who are thinking along similar lines much as a receiving set receives the vibrations from a broadcasting station. Naturally a thought wave creates more of its kind in the minds of the individuals whose minds it contacts. Unless counter currents are set up, the result will be similar to the one produced in the environment of the previous 'senders' of the thought wave."

"It appears as though all parts of the earth are doomed to reap, at one time or another, disaster."

The Brother shook his head. "Not necessarily disaster, only change. There really is no destruction. The word,

destruction, is only a relative term. Change is essential to growth. The thought waves we have been discussing are merely instruments by which changes are produced."

"But could not the necessary changes be produced without such terrible disasters?"

"What terrible disasters? It is in the minds of the majority of human beings that all must die some time. Whether he die alone, or in the company of others, what does it matter to the individual? To die suddenly, or of lingering old age – which is more merciful? The terror of it exists only in the mind of man. When a man knows, he welcomes the change called 'death' as an opportunity to enter a better environment.

"When an individual passes on from the world of material things, it is because the time has arrived for him to take a further step in his advancement. It is the natural instinct of self-preservation that makes a coward of a man in the presence of death. Man's consciousness will, some day, cease to harbor this attitude. Moreover, death, as we now term it, will cease to be a necessity to the affairs of mankind or in the progress of the world. Though the race in general is not aware of the possibility, many individuals, as you know, have transcended this phase."

"This is most interesting!" exclaimed Crane. "I have felt such was true for quite a while. But it was never, until now, forcefully driven home to me. Will it be long before the time arrives when men will not kill each other? In other words, will it be long before wars and capital punishment will be things of the past?"

"No. The day is fast approaching. Some of the states in America have abolished capital punishment. Before many years have elapsed, not a state in the Union will continue this practice. As for war – it, too, is to be eliminated. . . . Here is a device that will interest."

CHAPTER XI

In Advance of the Future

THE APPARATUS to which Crane's attention was now directed looked like a small boiler to which were attached many gauges and glass tubes. The latter resembled thermometers.

"The purpose of this device is to manipulate unseen substance through a change in the rate of vibration. Thus a most powerful force is apparently generated. In reality it is only collected and concentrated by this machine. This force, or energy, is stronger than any other ever discovered by man, and will always be stronger than any other force man has utilized, or any he ever will utilize. This super-strength is because of its nature. As we proceed the nature of it will become apparent to you.

"This force, when put into operation, is constructive. Any destructive force, or any force used with destructive intent, is absorbed by this constructive energy and rendered harmless. We shall try an experiment, to show how it operates. Here is a revolver that is loaded with steel bullets. Here is a piece of cardboard that may be used as a target. By the pushing in of this lever, the machine is thrown into operation. The waves of force thus sent in all directions will protect the cardboard and dis-

solve the bullets. Now, if you will fire the revolver, you will see what happens."

Crane fired the revolver once. His host indicated he should press the trigger again, and again – six times he pressed the trigger. Then, when he examined the cardboard, he saw not one of the bullets had touched it.

"It truly seems as if the bullets must have been dissolved," said Crane. "This is the most remarkable thing I have yet seen. And will the effect be the same on any other force – for instance, on poisonous gases, tear bombs, and things of like nature?"

"Any force that is destructive in its tendency immediately dissolves upon coming in contact with these protective waves, regardless of what may be the nature of the force."

"Why is it not possible for someone to devise a method of discovering a destructive force more potent than this? Were a man to work along the same lines of invention, would he not be apt to find such a force?"

"It is not possible, because of a Law. All destructive forces are of the moment only. In other words, they are products of man's mind, which is subject to constant change. This constructive energy is a cosmic force, and has behind it the velocity of eternity. It was discovered for constructive purposes only, not to extinguish but to preserve life."

"But the bullets I fired at the target – were they not destroyed?"

"No. Their physical forms were changed into an in-

visible substance, which in turn was converted into and absorbed by the constructive energy."

"And do you mean to say that the more destructive forces are hurled against it, the greater will be its own power to convert them into itself?"

"Exactly," smiled the kindly-faced Brother.

"Why is not such a benevolent instrument now placed in the hands of man? Why need there be further delay, since great good could be accomplished with it?"

"The time is not yet. Man has a few more lessons to learn, before he will be able to properly use it."

"Would you mind telling me how it happened that you were able to discover and control this force? How does it happen that this is the first time it has been used thus?"

"Your assumption is entirely wrong. It has been used before. Many wonderful things were used by man in another civilization. This device was in use at a time when human progress, physically speaking, was at a greater height than it now is. Human progress will again reach and surpass that height. Discoveries and inventions more wonderful than this will be used to further and accelerate man's advancement. Until the height that has previously been reached is again attained, most of the discoveries are merely repetitions of what once was, although some may differ somewhat in form from those of the past."

"I can readily see how this may be true," said Crane, and went on, "Returning to the subject of capital punishment, I should like to ask, will there not be methods of curing criminals of their evil tendencies through scien-

tific means? I have read that this practice will, some day, be used, though most people scoff at the idea."

"The time is fast approaching when many criminals such as would now be punished by death, or imprisonment, will be treated in special clinics. The purpose of these clinics will be to find, and to remove by surgery or otherwise, the causes of the abnormal acts. Most criminal acts have been committed because of physical defects of the delinquents, rather than because of a desire to do wrong. A man who is in perfect physical health seldom commits a crime."

"But what of mental tendencies?"

"As a general thing, if the physical body is healthy, the mind also is healthy. Body and mind react upon each other. The body is a vehicle through which the mind operates."

"Is it possible for the mind to be afflicted first? In other words, cannot the mind sometimes be the originator of wrong tendencies, instead of the body?"

"Yes, through the receptivity of the mind to low vibrations. But even then, if the physical body be perfectly healthy, the mind will not be so receptive to low vibrations. One way through which the mind may become abnormal to a great extent, may be pointed out. The daily newspapers of the country constantly picture to the mind the evils of the day, in such a manner as to impress the mind of the unhealthy with thought waves, which create abnormal tendencies and result in more activity of the same nature."

"I judge that in time newspapers will cease to print material which is so detrimental to the race?"

"The time is not far distant when the people will demand that nothing unclean be published. If people but knew what an influence for good or evil the press exerts, the human consciousness would almost immediately change to the extent that nothing but constructive news would be tolerated. Plans are now being made to launch a newspaper that will give such news of the day as will be interesting to those who have the welfare of the race as a whole at heart. At present, however, they are only plans. They will in time materialize into reality or tanglible results."

"Going back to inventive lines, I take it that the uses of electricity are to be greatly multiplied, and that new methods of controlling energy will be discovered that will assist in the generating of electricity."

"Indeed, yes. However, the term 'generate' is erroneously used. The generator, as we call it, only collects the force in such a manner that it may be directed to a desired end. But even the so-called generator in present day use will be discarded for better methods of utilizing this energy. Just step over this way. Here you see an apparatus no larger than a man's hat; yet through its use it is possible to do what may not be done with the largest electrical plant ever built. Here are a number of incandescent lamps, not in any way connected with an electric plant. Some of these may be placed under this iron lid. Now, by the inserting of this small plug into a

socket, all the lamps will emit light, just as they would were they attached to wires charged with electricity."

"What an amazing thing! Then at some time will all the large electrical plants become useless?"

"They will have served their purpose, and the simpler, less complicated machinery will surpass them in power and efficiency."

"It begins to dawn on me that if such progress continues, all heavy machinery will be done away with."

"It is true that man in his advancement will continue to replace ponderous methods with simpler and more efficacious ones. New devices are constantly being employed. Some day it will be possible to govern ships at sea, submarines under water, and airplanes in the sky, from a central point with no necessity of there being a man on board. All will be controlled by vibratory waves sent from the central station. Within a very few years, the electric lighting system of a large city will be governed by such a central station, without the use of the wiring now employed."

"As advancement along inventive lines is progressive, and every device is capable of and destined to greater and still greater improvement, it seems to me some sort of a climax in things mechanical, must in time be reached. What will that climax be?"

"As has already been observed, man must conquer the physical or material side of life before he can dispense with it. Eventually that time will come. In the evolution of man a time will come when, through his own inner powers, without the use of material means, he may ob-

tain all he desires. It is possible to bring into manifestation every constructive desire without material aid, if the necessary law be known and applied."

"Yes, I know that to be true," said Crane. "Since my entrance into the valley of the Brotherhood, I have seen evidences of this fact. What a world to live in, when such knowledge has become the property of all! This brings to my mind a deeper question. As each atom in the universe bears a relation to every other atom, what ultimately happens to matter itself, when the human consciousness has been raised to so high a point? It seems as though matter must be raised in its rate of vibration in some proportion as human consciousness advances."

"Quite true. As human consciousness advances, every particle of matter also advances. Thus, at some time, even the earth itself will become an etherealized body."

"You have many wonderful things here. Would you mind telling me how it happens that you spend most of your time among these marvelous devices, while others in the Valley apply themselves to matters less scientific?"

"Your conclusion is not quite true. Each member of the Brotherhood has a work to do. Each does the task he is best fitted to perform. Each has ample opportunity to expend his efforts in that which is nearest his heart. This makes his work a labor of joy. Let us pass into another chamber. Here you will find a work of a different nature, though no less scientific."

Crane found they were now in a room with a high vaulted ceiling. In the room were two women and a man, who were putting together a musical instrument, the

like of which he had never seen before. With his kindly mentor beside him, he watched until all the parts had been assembled. Then one of the women passed her hand over it, and, to Crane's astonishment, a wonderful thrilling tone emanated from the instrument.

The woman smiled at the others and said, "It is now satisfactory."

Seeing that they had visitors, the three beckoned Nona, Crane, and their host, to be seated. They seemed already to know Crane was one of them, for there was not a word nor a tone which indicated he had not been with them always.

The woman who seemed to be the directing mind in the assembling of the instrument, explained the intricacies of its mechanism, which proved to be quite simple. Yet with it one could by merely passing the hand over it, produce the most wonderful symphonies. The rise and fall of tones were governed entirely by the movements of the hand.

To illustrate she began passing her hands over the instrument, and music, soft and sweet, filled the room. So perfectly blended were the tones, it was impossible to determine just what kinds of instruments could produce them. The soothing effect of the music caused Crane to close his eyes and give himself up to the enjoyment of it.

CHAPTER XII

The Prodigy

QUITE SUDDENLY all was still, and Crane opened his eyes to find he was no longer in the wonder workshop of the Brotherhood, but out in the open where he could see a young boy trudging after a man – who he knew was the boy's father – in a field of grain.

The father paid scarce attention to his small son, but appeared to be completely absorbed in the task of gathering the ripened product from the slender stalks. The boy at times tried to imitate his father by gathering handfuls of the grain, though most of the time he busily endeavored to keep pace with his parent, whose long steps made this most difficult. He was a sturdy youngster of about six years, though his actions seemed to be those of a maturer age.

When the little fellow staggered with fatigue his father told him he should rest under the shade of a tree nearby, that he was too young to do a man's work; he should wait until he had grown more.

The boy wiped his tears away, straightened up to his full height, and said, "I am not too young. I am strong, and I am not too tired."

The father shook his head, as if he could not comprehend such obstinacy. From babyhood the child had had his way; nothing short of exactly what he wanted would do him. And he always succeeded in getting what he desired. Why he preferred to endure what to him was nothing less than torture, in order to prevent his being thwarted in his determination to work alongside his father, was more than his parent could understand.

Feeling that nothing could make his son rest, the father used subterfuge. "Lad, it be time thou and thy father didst go to the cottage. Let us be going."

So together they went to the little house they knew as home. At the cottage the father entered the kitchen, where the mother looked askance, for it was unusual for him to be home so early. In a low voice he explained.

"Maria, our son hath a new fancy. He thinketh to work alongside me in the field. Though he was like to have dropped from tiredness, the lad wouldst not rest. I did pretend it were time to be homecoming, else he wouldst have stayed on 'till he were dead. What'er are we to do with such a lad! Will he never learn he canst not have all things he doth set his mind to? I be nigh unto sickness at times, from wondering what'er will happen unto him when he doth grow up."

"It is most strange, Thomas. He is like neither thee nor me. He is as if he were a changeling – who dost belong to another family. Dost mind when thou didst strive to break his will? Out of pity thou didst cease thy beatings. Whilst my heart was breaking, still I felt, as thou didst, couldst he once be conquered, he wouldst give less

trouble later. He wouldst have let thee kill him ere he had given in. . . . I shudder yet from the memory of it!"

Thus the honest farmer and his wife discussed their son, who gave them much fear concerning his future. The little fellow had lain down and was fast asleep from sheer exhaustion.

Again the scene shifted. The boy – now a strong lad of some fourteen years – had early evinced a desire for learning; and a kindly priest nearby had taught the precocious one from his many books, until he could teach the lad no more. The priest knew he had been instructing a prodigy, for, in an astonishingly short time, Charles had shown an intelligence far beyond that of his grown-up associates. In the sports and games indulged in by the youth of the time, the lad excelled in all, could throw farther, run faster, and swim farther than any of his competitors. Even grown men, hardened with years of toil, were easily vanquished by his superior dexterity and tremendous will. Never had he been known to fail in anything he undertook. The lad was looked upon with awe and wonder by all his neighbors.

When the good Father told him he could teach him no more, the lad went to his parents, with his mind determined upon what he intended to do. He spoke to them more as if he were the parent, and they the children.

"My beloved parents," he said, "I have come to bid thee farewell for a time. I leave for the city at once. It is not for me to live in the country longer. There is much for me to do in other places. The treatment I have received from thee hath been exceptionally good, in spite

of the fact that it is not possible for me to live as befits the humble farmer. I go to make conquests as befit my ambitions. Thou shalt hear from me anon. Thou shalt have no cause to regret this parting, though, naturally, for a time 'twill be lonesome here without me. I shall also be lonesome without thee. But time doth heal all such wounds, and the worst hurts are the most rewarded. Be of good cheer. Farewell."

He kissed his mother's cheek and embraced his father. Then he picked up a small bundle which contained only a change of clothes, and he was gone. It did not occur to the parents to interfere with his plans. Long before they had learned the futility of attempting anything of the kind. He seemed always to know what was best to be done. Much prosperity had come to them because of his astuteness in many matter. He seemed never to make a mistake. Unconsciously, they had accepted him as a being superior to themselves. Now that he had gone, they felt much as children do when left by their parents.

The lad traveled many weary miles on foot. Upon leaving home he had not provided himself with funds. His parents thought of this with some misgivings, after he had gone, but they soon reflected he would be able to take care of himself, under almost any circumstances. Without food the traveler walked, and when day came to a close, he still walked on. At last, when the night was nearly spent, he placed his bundle as a pillow at the foot of a tree, and slept until the sun appeared. Then he arose, stretched, and continued on his travels, only stopping at a brook long enough to drink deeply and to wash. Some

time later he was overtaken by a farmer's cart on the way to the city.

"Ho! there, lad, dost wish a ride?"

"No. I accept favors from no man. Howbeit, I thank thee for thy good intentions."

Astonished at this reply from the lad, the farmer drove on without further parley. About an hour later, the lad overtook the good farmer and the cart. They were in a mudhole. The farmer, with all his strength, had been unable to extricate the cart from the grip of the quagmire.

Seeing the predicament, the lad said, "I will help thee. But first, unhitch the horse."

Not stopping to reason as to why he should obey one so young, the farmer unhitched the horse.

"Now, let us get another pole."

"But, young sir, I have been able to do naught with the pole we have."

"Thou hast not used it right. I shall show thee a better way."

As though it had been his duty all his life to extricate carts from mudholes, the lad threw one pole into the mud, just in front of the cart wheel that had sunk so deeply. With the other pole he pushed the first pole more deeply into the mud in front of the wheel. Using the first as a resting place, he soon had the wheel gradually emerging from the miry depths and onto the pole that lay before it.

"Fetch another pole," he called.

Another pole was fetched by the farmer, and the wheel was raised to a point where it was at the same

height as the other wheel. Then it was an easy matter to hitch the horse to the cart and pull it out.

The good farmer looked curiously at the lad, and said, "Young sir, who art thou, and how was it, whilst I, with all my brawn, could not raise the cart, thou, but a stripling, hast done it quickly?"

"The brain is stronger than brawn. Thou hast used thy brawn, I my brain. Now that this hath been done, I will ride with thee. Methinks my brain hath paid for the ride."

"Thou art welcome, thrice welcome, young sir. Thou hast paid for thy ride many times over. But it is a later hour, and methinks it a good hour to dine. Here is a basket, and, if thou wilt share it with me, we shall eat."

"Very good. I will eat with thee, since I have rendered thee a service. Otherwise I must refuse, for, as I told thee this morning, I accept no favors from any man."

"Thou art a queer person. I fear thou shalt not fare easily in the city, for only too many are willing to take a service without giving any in return."

"I shall be able to take care of myself, my friend."

"Somehow, young friend, I believe thee. Thou art unusual. Thy appearance is that of a farmer lad, but thy tongue doth wag like that of a barrister.

"My farmer's rags shall soon be changed for other garb; then we shall see what we shall see. If at some time thou dost need a friend in the city, ask for Charles, the son of Thomas. And thou thinkest I speak like a barrister? That soundeth not bad. A barrister. I could

do worse. A barrister, I shall be. Ask then for Charles, the son of Thomas, barrister."

Having arrived at the inn near the city, Charles bade farewell to the farmer, and proceeded on foot. The farmer remained at the inn. In about an hour, the lad was in the suburbs. Seeing several lads of about his own age playing some kind of a game under the shade of a large tree, he approached them and asked the way to the quarters of a prominent barrister.

They stopped their sports immediately, and surrounded him. One said, looking at his farmer's togs, "What think ye, comrades? This gentleman seeketh a barrister. Mayhap he be a prince in disguise!"

This sally brought forth shouts of laughter from the others, who followed up with more jesting. Charles saw matters were not going to be as pleasant for him as he had anticipated. Other lads, seeing the gathering, came on the run to see what the excitement was about. They, too, joined in with gibes and guffaws.

For a time Charles looked at them in surprise; but, when one of his tormentors grasped hold of the faded jacket with the evident intention of tearing it from its wearer, he promptly reached out and gave the offender a cuff on the jaw. The city lad was sent sprawling.

Almost immediately a half dozen of the youths closed in on him.

"Let's throw him into the duck pond!" yelled one.

"Aye, let's see how long he can live under water," shouted another.

With a rush they were on him. But they were tossed this way and that, like so many rag dolls. The strength he displayed caused the city lads to stand apart for a moment, as if to consider what their next step would be. In that brief pause, Charles took the opportunity to speak to them.

"My friends, I have come to thee in a courteous manner to ask the way to my destination. Ye have seen fit to act like ruffians. I am now come to the end of my patience. I am giving ye all a service undeserved, when I warn thee to desist from thy conduct. It befitteth only a band of curs when they encounter a stranger. Else I shall punish thee according to thy merit."

"Didst hear? The oaf will punish us. And he saith we are curs! Let us be at him. . . . Surround him!"

The speaker was immediately grasped by the neck, as was a companion nearest him. Their heads crashed together in a sickening thud, and both lay upon the ground quivering. Two more, before they could recover from their surprise, were treated in a like manner. The rest then took to their heels.

With arms folded, Charles waited until the four upon the ground slowly arose to a sitting posture.

"Now tell me that which I have asked of thee, and be quick about it. Give me the name and quarters of the best barrister in the city."

Before any one of the four could speak, a rich, mellow voice broke in upon them.

"I am a barrister, young sir. I had left my coach for a bit of a walk, when I heard the beginnings of thy quar-

rel with these young rascals. I had a desire to see it through, with the intention of using my cane upon them, had they treated thee too roughly. But thou didst need no defender. Come with me. I would see what manner of lad thou art to put to defeat a whole mob of these scourges. What wouldst thou do with a barrister?"

"I would also be a barrister. I will find a way to repay thee for whatever service thou mayst render me in this matter."

The barrister smiled behind his hand. This ragamuffin from the country did possess ambition! Yet the lad spoke as one who had had instruction. Perhaps he could find something for the young fellow to do, until this self-confident one learned becoming a barrister was not altogether an easy task.

They had now approached the place where they could be seen by the barrister's coachman, who promptly drove up to his master and the latter's protege and the two entered the coach.

"Where dost intend staying whilst thou dost prepare thyself for the bar?"

"I do not know yet, but I shall find a place when the time comes."

"Hast thou the means of paying for thy lodging meantime? It may take some time to prepare for such a calling."

" 'Twill not take me so long as it hath done others. I have not the means of paying for anything, but the way will come when the time doth come for me to pay. I shall be provided for."

This was said with such assurance the good barrister did not smile this time. Nevertheless he felt this youngster, for the first time in the city, would be hard put to take care of himself until he found the world was not as he had supposed it to be, some kind of fruit waiting for him to pick. Then the practitioner of law remembered how well the lad had taken care of himself when assaulted by the city lads he had met.

A sudden impulse made the barrister say, "I could put thee up at my house for a time; at least until thou hadst found the ways of the city, and what is best for thee to do."

"Good sir, I accept favors from no man. If there be aught I can do in return for the service, I will go to live with thee. Otherwise, I shall work for another, who will support me meanwhile. I didst accept the ride in thy coach, because thou saidst thou wert a barrister. I would have a place in thy quarters to learn to be a barrister. If thou hast place for me, I shall repay thee later. I will take nothing, unless I pay for it in some way."

"We shall see about that. Methinks there will be a way. I shall show thee where thou art to stay."

Alighting from the coach, they proceeded up a flight of stone steps to the great front door, where they were admitted by a maid. Charles thought, if a barrister were able to afford so pretentious a place, he had chosen well in selecting his career.

The maid looked askance at Charles, but, catching a look from her master, she made a curtsy.

"Nancy, prepare a chamber for my young friend, for he is to stay with us for a time."

It was not the custom of her master to bring even well-dressed youngsters home with him. This lad seemed not only to be of the poor sort, but, too, his manners were those of one not even of the city. Well, it was none of her affair, but it was most strange.

While the maid was making ready the quarters in which Charles was to make his home for the present, the good barrister said, "What is thy name, lad?"

"Charles, the son of Thomas, farmer. And will it please thee to tell me to whom I am indebted for the courtesies thou hast extended to me?"

"They call me John Kentworth, barrister."

"I have read of thee. Thou art also a writer. The good priest who instructed me hath said that thou hast a most discerning mind. I am very glad that I have selected thee as the barrister I was seeking."

This was said in a matter-of-fact way, as though the speaker were the only one to be considered. The good John Kentworth again smiled. Here, indeed, was a curious specimen of the genus homo. Never before had Kentworth observed such assurance.

"I shall send the coachman to fetch a tailor to fit thee in raiment better suited to thy needs in the city."

"And when dost thou intend the payment to be?"

"In this there will be no need for payment. The custom here is to include the dress for those who enter the service thou art about to embark upon."

A dapper little man, his manner very business-like and his mouth full of pins, shortly was measuring Charles.

The barrister asked, "How quickly can you deliver my young friend's clothes?"

"If there be haste, I shall have all my assistants work on the garments, and deliver them this eve."

"Very well, there is haste. And see that thou keepest the measurements, for other garments will be needed soon."

The tailor departed, and Charles and his host became engaged in conversation. Soon the barrister had learned all there was to know about his guest, with a few exceptions. He was surprised at the lad's command of language; marveled that a youth could learn so much in a farming district. He saw here was one who might go far, if given an opportunity. Having no family of his own, he felt he might find much of interest in watching the development of this boy whose thoughts were those of a man.

A servant announced that the table was ready. Host and guest proceeded to the table, and commenced partaking of the ample repast. The barrister noticed the lad made himself perfectly at home, as though all his life he had been accustomed to this kind of living. His manners were without hesitation or self-consciousness, though he watched his host closely, with the evident intention of imitating John Kentworth, so as to avoid the committing of some error in deportment. This pleased the barrister greatly, for it indicated it would not be difficult for the lad to learn to hold his own in

any company, did he so continue to use his powers of observation.

A few hours later the tailor arrived with the clothes, and Charles went to his quarters to try them on. When he returned, both the barrister and the tailor uttered ejaculations of astonishment, for here was a young man with all the self-possession of a gentleman of means and refinement.

As he walked toward them, he said, "As thou observest, the garments fit well. This is the first step. I would begin my duties immediately, for I have no time to waste."

"Peace, peace, young sir. On the morrow, thou shalt commence thy labors."

"Very well. But I had hoped I could begin at once." Plainly he was disappointed.

The next day the barrister took Charles to his office. Kentworth introduced his protege to a clerk, and gave instructions that the clerk show the newcomer where the different books, letters, and files were kept.

"For the time being thou shalt act as page," said John Kentworth. "Thy duties will be to bring to me, or to my associates, any book or paper that may be desired."

The boy entered upon his duties with a zest that made the entire office force regard him quizzically. Never had they seen such enthusiasm and energy. He soon mapped out a system of his own whereby he could more quickly locate whatever was needed. Two other pages, who had been in the office for some time, responded when called upon, and immediately after the book or other matter had been delivered or returned to its place, sat down on the

chairs provided for them to sit on. But it was, indeed, not the practice of Charles.

During the entire day, and for many days thereafter, his chair was never touched. He was always busy arranging this or that, or committing to memory the exact places of everything in the files or on the bookshelves. When there was nothing more to be learned in that regard, he began looking through some of the books he had handled. One day he asked his employer what book would be the best with which to begin his study of the profession.

The barrister good-humoredly made him a list of books, and admonished Charles, "All these thou must peruse ere thou canst qualify as a barrister."

The barrister thought when the boy found how dry and uninteresting these studies would prove to be, he would be glad to confine himself to his duties as page. Charles asked permission to take the first book with him to be perused at night in his quarters. Night after night the boy read law until he could no longer stay awake; and his prodigious memory enabled him to retain everything he read.

He became very friendly with the head clerk, who explained many things to him in answer to his numerous questions. He requested the clerk to show him what he had to learn in order to become a clerk. This was gladly done, and in a credibly short time Charles could take care of the clerk's work better even than the clerk himself, with the result that the clerk enjoyed a very easy time. Then, one day, the clerk became very ill and could not present himself for work as usual. The bar-

rister and his associates were much perturbed, as only the clerk was supposed to know certain things about the office routine. While they were discussing the situation, Charles entered with some books that had been sent for.

Having overheard a part of the conversation, he approached his employer and said, "Sir, I will take care of the clerk's business for thee. I know it very well."

"What? Thou? Dost know it taketh years to learn the work as this man hath learned it?"

"Yes. I know that quite well—for most people. But I am not like that; I will do the work and do it well."

Something in the lad's tone made an impression.

"Very well. We shall see. Thou mayest begin."

To the surprise of everyone the work was accomplished in much less time than formerly, and it was more neatly and efficiently done. So it happened that Charles kept the position and received the clerk's wages, the clerk having died of his illness. For a time the under clerks resented the situation. While they knew not one of them was capable of carrying on the work, the fact of a page being placed over them was not welcomed. But, since they could do nothing about it, they became reconciled to the matter.

In a few months Charles accomplished a feat which took the ordinary student years; he mastered the entire list of books handed him by the barrister. From this on, he knew which books he should take up in succession. Being a clerk gave him a distinct advantage, for he was present at every trial in which the barrister and his

associates participated. Thus he was absorbing all the details necessary for the carrying on of a case in court.

One day his employers found themselves confronted with a matter that required much thought. It was a matter concerning a dispute as to the boundary line between two great estates, the line at one time having been designated as a center of a stream that flowed between the two estates. It was found later by the descendants of those who had established such a boundary that the small stream had changed its bed for a considerable distance. Each of the two owners, not being friendly toward each other, made such claims as could be settled only in the courts.

The one on whose property the stream flowed altogether, claimed the property beyond it, to a point which he claimed was the center at the time the boundary was established. The other claimed the present center of the stream as the boundary line; and alleged he was entitled to half the stream. This, he claimed, was the intention of those who established the boundary line. Altogether it was a rather complicated affair, and no precedent had yet been established as to who would be right under the circumstances.

Much of the discussion was carried on within the hearing of Charles. The barristers for the opposite side were also very powerful, and it was plain it would be a hotly contested case. It would be a grave matter should they lose it, though it would not add a great deal to their prestige if they won. Yet they could not refuse to take the case, as they had conducted the legal affairs of their

client in this matter for many years, as had their fathers before them conducted similar matters for the ancestors of the present owner of one of the properties involved.

When Charles had heard enough to have the situation clearly in his mind, he spoke, quoting certain authorities, giving the articles, sections, paragraphs, and even the pages whereon the quotations might be found. And he gave a brief but effective method by which the matter could be managed to the satisfaction of their client. They were dumbfounded when, on checking what he had said, they found his summarization to be true. Their case was practically won already.

It occurred to John Kentworth, who was really the head of this firm of barristers, to ask Charles what else he could advise concerning the cause. And Charles, without hestitation, gave an outline of the entire proceedings, in so clear and concise a manner there could be no doubt as to the outcome.

Then the good barrister said, "Charles, methinks when this case is completed, we shall go through the regular procedure as to examinations for thy admission as a barrister."

"Aye. Thy intention is declared in good time, for I was about to give thee notice of my resignation as clerk, for that very purpose. I am ready to pass the examination and be received. Hence, I now give thee the notice that two months from now I shall vacate the position of thy clerk. I know of what the examinations consist, and am ready."

"So—thou hast already made thy plans. Never before have I seen such confidence, Charles. Thou must have burned the candle at both ends, to have gained so much in so short a time. But I warn thee, the examinations are not as easy as they may seem to thee."

"I have no fear, sir. I am ready to take the examinations at any time—now, if need be. Cannot the examinations be held at once, that I may be qualified to assist thee in this case?"

"Ho! Is there no limit to thy ambitions? Well, we shall call in the other barristers necessary to such examinations and see what they have to say."

The prestige of John Kentworth enabled him to obtain whatever service he desired quickly. He sent a summons to different barristers of the city, and soon had in his office the seven barristers necessary, as required by law, to conduct such examinations.

"My Lords," said John Kentworth, "We have here a most unusual matter. Our clerk hath given notice that he is renouncing his position to take the examinations. He is very young, but he is strangely proficient in whatever he doth undertake. I have never before seen such assurance as he doth possess. I wish to assist him in the attainment of his desires, but, because of my wishes in the matter, lest they influence thee without thy knowledge of such influence, I wish thee to make the examinations more severe. If then he doth pass them, will he indeed deserve the attainment of his ambitions. And if he doth not, it may be very valuable to him, in that he

may learn all is not to be had by merely desiring it. I shall now call him, that we may proceed."

Charles was called and introduced to the dignified and austere gentlemen who were to cross-examine him, and the examinations proceeded without further delay. For three hours the barristers took turns in asking questions; and Charles answered the questions, clearly and unhesitatingly. Not a question was left unanswered; and when, on more than one occasion, one of the barristers contradicted an answer, Charles cited his authority, giving the page and paragraph in the volume cited, to the chagrin of the one who contradicted.

They finally ceased, and, addressing John Kentworth, one of the barristers said, "My Lord, I think it useless to proceed further. I, for one, am willing to say the examinations are concluded, and to declare the aspirant is fully qualified to enter the profession as a barrister."

"My Lords, is this the judgment of ye all?" asked Kentworth.

"Aye," quoth the others.

"Then, with the powers invested in us by law, we declare the aspirant duly qualified to enter the profession as barrister."

Thus, at the age of sixteen years, Charles became a barrister, and was taken into the firm of John Kentworth and Associates as junior member.

No elation was expressed either by word or in the countenance of Charles. He had laid his plans; he had worked toward the consummation of these plans; he had succeeded, which was what he had expected to do.

During the two years he had been with the barrister, he had not seen his parents, though he had sent them messages of cheer, also an occasional remittance. He had written them nothing as to his activities, except that he was doing as well as he had expected to do. Now that he had been admitted to the profession, he felt he would like to pay them a visit.

It so happened that his father's small farm adjoined the estate of the firm's wealthy client. If the case were lost, Charles' father would lose a part of his farm, as his boundary line also was affected by the changing stream that had caused the difficulty between the two larger estates. Now he made known to the firm his intention of visiting his father for the purpose of making his parent a joint defendant in the suit against their client.

"Otherwise, my parent may find, at some later period, the same situation doth confront him that doth now confront his wealthy neighbor," said Charles. "As he lacketh means to make defense of his right, he wouldst surely lose out."

Again John Kentworth had cause to smile upon the astuteness of the junior member. The father of Charles would be made secure in possession if they won the case, without having to pay for a costly court proceeding.

Hence the good barrister said to Charles, "It is only fitting that thou shouldst take the coach for thy journey to thy father's house. I shall send for the coachman at once."

So it happened that within two years from the time the barrister had taken the country lad in his coach to

his house, Charles found himself riding in the same vehicle on the way to his parents. When the fine coach drove up to the front door of the house, his father and mother were surprised and looked to see who could have business with them. When they saw a well-tailored young man step from the door which the coachman held open for him, they could scarcely comprehend that he was their Charles.

Calmly he embraced his parents, then he briefly told them of his success since he had left them. In a matter-of-fact tone, without showing the least indication of elation, he made known to them that he was now a barrister, and engaged upon his first case. He told of the law suit that was to involve them in litigation later on, and related his plan to make them safe for all time by means of the pending suit.

"I have brought with me the necessary documents thou art to sign," he said; and when those had been signed, he stated calmly, "Since thou art co-defendants with thy neighbor, it will be necessary for thee to be present at the trial of this case. It were best than thou doth accompany me to the city this day."

Too bewildered to more than nod in compliance with this suggestion, they began their preparations for the departure with their astonishing offspring. The mother sought to put in a bundle of clothes she thought would be necessary.

"Nay, Mother, trouble not thyself with the raiment. Suitable garments shall be prepared for thy entrance to the Court in the city. Leave thy bundle," said Charles.

On the way to the city various subjects were discussed relative to the farm and to Charles' meteoric rise in the world.

His father queried: "I wouldst have thought thou must give to it many years of study, ere thou couldst become a barrister?"

" 'Tis true for others, but not for me."

Because this was said with utter lack of boastfulness and in a most matter-of-fact way, it was long before the father could fully comprehend what Charles intended to convey was that he was an unusual being and knew it, yet that his knowledge of it was without pride or elation. It was a condition that existed, and that was all there was to it."

In the city Charles conducted his parents to an inn where he told them they were to stay during their visit there. Next, he sent the coachman for the tailor, to whom he gave orders to prepare the necessary garments.

The little tailor, fussy and talkative, soon had the measurements, and was about to retire when Charles said:

"I wouldst have that these garments be brought with all possible haste."

"Very well, sir, it shall be done. I shall bring foot wear also from the cobblers and all that is needful."

"Good. Leave nothing unattended."

The tailor vanished, and Charles, excusing himself with the statement that he must be at work, also left.

The good farmer said, "Wife, what makest thou of this? Our son hath left the farm with only his farmer's

rags on his back, and now we see him as a gentleman and a barrister—yet he doth still be but a stripling."

" 'Tis most strange, my husband. He speaketh and acteth as would a prince. And these wonderful quarters! I feel like 'tis but a dream, and I am afeared to wake. There be times, when he is silent, I canst feel 'tis our son. But when he doth speak, I am in awe of him, as though he were not of our family, but rather some great personage who hath deigned to condescend to aid us."

CHAPTER XIII

The Trial

AT THE OFFICES Charles approached his superior and said, "Sir, I would speak with thee relative to our court matter. I desire to be allowed to conduct this matter alone. If thou wilt convey to our opponents that I am to conduct the case, 'twill be the much easier won."

"By heaven, young sir, thou hast made good all thy promises heretofore, but this is a bit too far. Dost know this is a matter of great importance to us, and that thou, who hast never conducted a case in court, art asking to be permitted to do the work that we, even in our very much greater experience, are not entirely sure about?"

"I realize full well the importance of the case, and it is that which prompts me to make the request. To be frank with thee, I do not feel so secure with thy conducting of the case as I would if it were being conducted by myself, for I shall win it. Hast thou yet known me to fail in an undertaking?"

" 'Tis true. Thou hast succeeded in all things, so far, but who knows when thy first defeat will come?"

"I shall never fail."

"By all the prophets, thou art a curious person. Granting that thou be permitted to conduct the matter, how

wilt thou, by being known as the barrister who doth conduct the case, assist us? Pray tell me that."

"It is thus. My father is a co-defendant. Thou shalt give notice that all have withdrawn from the case, and left it with me at my request, owing to the fact of my father being a co-defendant. Our opponents, not knowing the real state of affairs, will conclude thou hast feared the loss of the case and left it with me, so as not to have the blame for losing it upon thee and our associates personally, but rather upon the firm for having entrusted a mere youth with it. For that thou wilt be blamed somewhat, of course, before the case is tried. Our opponents, thinking they have the reason for thy withdrawal, will not be so wary, but will expect an easy victory. And I am willing to pit my wits against theirs, as far as knowing the law and the conducting of a case is concerned."

"By the great Jehovah, I believe thou art right. I believe thee, though our client, methinks, will tear his hair meantime. Ne'er wouldst I have thought I would have given in to such an arrangment. But thou hast convinced me; I do believe thy astuteness will give thee victory. It shall be done."

As was predicted by John Kentworth, their client was unable to comprehend why it was announced that all had withdrawn from his case and turned it into the hands of a youth. In angry haste he called at the firm's offices, and demanded to know if it were true.

"Now calm thyself, my Lord, and wait till we tell thee this is only a way to win thy case. We have fallen upon

a plan that will, in all probability, assure us of easy victory. We were considerably doubtful, until we had formulated this plan, as you may remember. Thy interest doth lie in the successful outcome, not in the way in which it is done."

"Then thee and thy associates are still behind the matter?"

"Do not compel us to talk, but know that thou hast nothing to fear. We have let it be known that we are out of the matter. We wish not to go on record as having given out certain information, and then telling the contrary to thee."

"Well, I do not understand it but if we be losers in the case, I shall see to it that it shall be the end of thy business."

"Thou art in an unhappy mood, my Lord, to speak thus. We shall converse later of thy threat," said John Kentworth sternly.

"Thy pardon. 'Tis true, I am over-anxious."

At length the day for the trial arrived. Charles' parents were present, dressed as elegantly as anyone else in the court room, although they were not at ease as were the others. When the case was called, and the attorney for the plaintiff had concluded his opening plea, Charles arose and with utmost poise presented the plea of the defense. Whereupon the rich client spoke to John Kentworth in a very loud whisper!

"So thou hast let this stripling have it after all. I am wondering if thou art not in league with my enemy?"

"Be quiet for a moment, my Lord. Thou art soon to learn something thou shalt not forget."

As Charles proceeded, he quoted from memory points of law which had not been known to his adversaries, and other points which had been entirely overlooked. In their rebuttal it was plainly seen they had already given up all hopes of competing against the masterly plea of the opposing counsel. And, within a very few moments after the pleas had been entered, a verdict in favor of the defendants was rendered.

All within the court room were stupefied when they knew a well known firm of barristers had been worsted by a mere boy. As for the parents of the young barrister, they were awed beyond description. Could it be possible that they were the parents of this masterful personality? As for Charles, he merely gathered up his papers and prepared to leave, as though this were a daily occurence with him.

But before he could leave, his unwilling client approached him. "Young sir, I would speak with thee a moment. I was much against thy conducting this matter, but I now see it could not have been entrusted to better hands. Never before have I seen such discomfiture as that of my opponents. I have other matters of which I would speak. My coach will come for thee this eve."

Good John Kentworth's eyes were shining. Their client's invitation to Charles was tantamount to a command. It meant the junior partner was in high favor. But the answer of Charles gave consternation to the mind of the barrister.

"Thou art kind, my Lord, but I have other matters pending for the moment. Some days hence, perhaps, I may find time to visit thee. But not this day—howbeit, I thank thee."

The client, who was not accustomed to having his requests refused in such a manner, was aghast at the reply, though it had been delivered in such a matter-of-fact way that it did not sound insolent. For a moment the good man could find no suitable answer. Then he remembered here was no ordinary person.

"Very well, sir," he said in an agreeable tone. "I shall await thy convenience. Send me a messenger when thou wouldst see me."

In the offices, John Kentworth said to his associates: "Didst see how he made of the lion a lamb? I thought his Lordship would smite him for the affront, but he controlled himself and was pleased to await the lad's pleasure. 'Tis most remarkable how our junior partner hath his way in all things! I could scarcely restrain my laughter when the looks of entire satisfaction didst leave the countenances of our opponents. Truly this hath been a great day."

Charles had left word that he would be absent from the office for a time on other matters. After making his way to the inn where his parents were, he hired a coach and took them around the city on a long drive. Late in the evening they returned to the inn, when he told them he would take them home on the morrow, and bade them goodnight.

"Now that the farm is safe, thou mayest rest in peace. None shall again make an attempt to take it from thee."

"Yes, my son," said the farmer, "and we have thee to thank for it. I know not what to say, so I, therefore, shall say nothing."

Charles merely nodded and walked away to the waiting coach.

Back in the offices Charles looked over the various matters pending. Carrying a sheaf of papers to the private office of John Kentworth, he said: "Are these all the matters we now have pending?"

"Yes, I think there be sufficient to keep us busy for a lengthy time. Why dost thou ask?"

"If thou wilt let me manage them in my own way, they shall be the more quickly disposed of."

"Indeed? But if thou dost this, what shall the rest of us do? Must we fold our hands and let thee carry on our business for us?"

"If thou wouldst receive and speak with those who have business, I would take care of the rest of the affairs alone."

"And dost think thou canst, alone, do what hath taken us all to do, ere thy advent here?"

"Let us try it for a time and see what the result will be."

"Very well. I shall twiddle my thumbs, whilst thou dost play with this new toy. I sometimes wonder, hath thy energy and ambition no limits?"

When Charles had re-arranged his papers, he called on his clients and their opponents, and in nearly every

instance compelled them to see the justice of his opinions, with the result that all the matters were settled out of court. This was done within a few days; thus matters that would otherwise have taken many months were cleared up in a fortnight. Besides, he had won the respect of both the clients and the representatives of the opposing side, by his clear-cut statements and his attitude of fairness. When all had been completed, he took the papers to John Kentworth and told him how the cases had been settled.

The senior barrister could only gaze at his young associate in profound amazement. "Young sir," he said, "I am come to believe thou art not human. What sort of sorcery is this?"

Charles merely replied, "Now I go to the House of Hendon. As thou wilt recall, Lord Hendon hath asked me to see him."

"Yes, and I am surprised that he hath waited patiently on thy good pleasure. 'Tis strange, most strange! Had one of the others of us ventured to delay him in his wishes, he wouldst have finished with us all. Well, I am curious to know what it is that he desireth of thee."

That day, in the afternoon, Charles arrived at the House of Hendon—a great castle whose walls were old when Richard the Lionheart was young. When it was made known to Lord Hendon that Charles had arrived, it was ordered that he be immediately admitted. As he passed through the great hall he was vaguely conscious of being familiar with the place. Many things were as

well known to him as though he had seen them but a few days before. This puzzled him not a little.

When he finally entered the chamber where his host awaited him, he was asked, rather curtly, to be seated.

Charles said nothing.

"I have some matters pending here that will no doubt interest thee. These are maps and titles of several large estates. I have a plan through which I may become possessor of many of them for the asking. Thou, who knowest so well the law, and who art no doubt desirous of bettering thy condition, as any young man should be, mayest be of much use to me in my ambitions. I shall require thee to devote thy entire time to my business, for which thou shalt receive far more than thou couldst ever hope to gain with thy present situation. Thou shalt be made wealthy beyond thy fondest dreams."

This was said in a manner that indicated there was no doubt as to the proposition being accepted. But Charles answered in a manner that was not only surprising, but disconcerting as well.

"Dost mean I am to withdraw from the firm with which I am at present associated?"

"Yes. And no doubt thou hast never dreamed of receiving an offer such as this I have made thee."

"Let us not waste time nor words, my Lord. I shall not, under any circumstances, leave my firm."

Taken aback, Lord Hendon said, "But think, man! Thou wilt receive more in one year here, than thou wouldst receive in ten where thou art now situated."

"E'en though it were one hundred and ten times as much, it would not be different."

"But I understand thee not. Dost not labor for what thou mayest acquire through thy labors? Dost refuse to become wealthy in a much shorter time?"

"My Lord, I am a busy person. I have not time to waste in useless arguing. I refuse thy offer. Unless thy business is given to the firm, I shall have naught to do with it. Furthermore, if there be aught that would do another hurt or injustice, the firm will have naught to do with it."

"My word, young sir, but none hath dared to speak to me in such a manner. My wonder is that I do not have thee driven hence, and speedily."

"My Lord, I have explained to thee that I am a busy person, and have no time to waste with idle talk. If thy business with me be finished, I beg leave to retire."

This was said without haste or indication of anger.

"By all the gods, young sir, who art thou who canst make free with such speech unto thy superiors?"

"My Lord, I bid thee good day."

"Hold. I have not yet finished with thee. First of all, I shall tell thee that my plans do not embrace the injuring of other persons. I mean to own the estates I have mentioned, that they mayest be made to produce the cost of their maintenance. The owners are to lose them at all hazards. 'Twould be far better to lose them to one who wouldst properly care for them, than to others who wouldst continue to let them stagnate into morasses unfit

for even the pigs. But it goeth very much against the grain, young sir, to be forced into such explanations."

Here the conversation was suddenly interrupted.

A musical voice, low and sweet, said, "Father, may I enter?" And a maiden of some eighteen or twenty years advanced into the chamber. Then the good master of the House of Hendon was tendered a surprise that left him speechless, for with a cry from both Charles and the maid, the two were in each other's arms.

"My queen!" cried Charles.

"Oh, my king!" answered the maiden.

For a time nothing was said. Then the lord of the House of Hendon said: "What deviltry is this? How is it that thou hast called each other king and queen, and hast embraced in such fashion upon first meeting? Or am I dreaming?"

Charles led the girl to where her father was seated.

"Good sir, I doubt that such explanations as we have to offer will suffice. But at one time, long years ago, thy daughter was my queen and I her king. We have awaited this meeting for long years."

The old gentleman could only continue to stare. He had read of such things, but that such should happen in his own family was, of course, sufficient to unsettle him for a moment. Always he had been a deep student in the matters of science, as science was known in those days, and not a little had he ventured into the realms of the super-physical.

At length, an idea flashed across Lord Hendon's mind.

He would test this matter so thoroughly that, one way or the other, there would be no room left for doubt.

"This is indeed a surprise. But I would satisfy myself that it is not some kind of witchery. Dost both remember this past of which thou speakest?"

"Oh, how could we forget?" cried the maiden.

"Aye, it is as though it were only yesterday," quoth Charles.

"Good. Now, my daughter, thou shalt retire to thy quarters for a little time. I would question each of thee, apart. If both tellest the same story, I shall be convinced."

After the girl had left the chamber, Lord Hendon said, "Now tell me more of this affair. Tell me about this kingdom of thine, and about thy relations with my daughter, Elizabeth."

Charles talked for an hour. He told of the uniting in times past of three kingdoms under one rulership, and told of the events leading up to that time.

Lord Hendon found the tale so interesting he forgot the passage of time. Finally he said, "This is most strange. I beg thee to wait until I do return."

In another chamber he found his daughter, to whom he said: "My child, I have heard a most strange tale. Now I would ask thee to tell me something of this past of thine. Thus I may find out how well the two versions fit."

Elizabeth told him practically the same story Charles had told, though she added much that Charles had left

out, concerning the greatness of her former king and husband.

Long her father pondered over the situation. "'Tis most strange, most strange," he said to himself. Then he asked, "And how long hast thou known of this extraordinary thing?"

"I have remembered it from the time I was a wee baby, my father."

"Is it possible? And how was it, pray tell me, that thou hast never mentioned it?"

"What wouldst thou, Father? I knew thou wouldst not comprehend, and thou wouldst have thought me queer."

"True, E'en so, I have ever thought thee an odd child. Thy proficiency in thy studies, thy demeanor since babyhood; all thy acts proclaimed thee an unordinary child. And now it is thus explained. But I am now puzzled as to what is to be done about it. Should we speak of such things to others, we should be charged with sorcery."

"Puzzle not, Father. Charles will see to it that what is best to be done shall be done."

Surprised, the old gentleman looked at his daughter. "It seemeth to me thou hast a trust in the sagacity of this young man, that outweigheth thy belief in the wisdom of one who is much older."

"Nay, Father. He only seemeth young to thee. As thou must now know, he is very old in wisdom, though his apparent youth doth belie it."

"True again. I had forgot. Also he hath a way about him that doth make me know he is very wise. At times

he hath taken me to task with his confidence. And it hath occurred to me more than once that he was too filled with conceit. But now I see the why of it. Well let us approach him, and see what solution he doth offer to that which now confronteth us."

Hand in hand they walked into the chamber where Charles waited. He arose as they entered. It now seemed to the owner of Hendon Hall that Charles had grown in stature, and that there was a dignity about him which he had not before observed. There was that in Charles' carriage that commanded the attention and respect due a greater personage than a young barrister yet in his teens.

Bowing respectfully before he sat down, the master of Hendon Hall said, "And now what is in thy mind to do?"

"It is best that for a time matters should rest as they are. There is no need for any action for the present. All will be taken care of in due time. It will be best that I change my living quarters to thine own house, as thy daughter and I have need of each other."

Instead of being affronted by this suggestion, as he would have been had matters been otherwise, Lord Hendon merely said: "As thou wilt. I feel thou wilt deal with the whole situation as will be best. But what are we to say to those who may inquire as to the reason for thy removal here?"

"No explanations will be necessary. I am a barrister. I shall continue with my firm. I have matters to arrange for thee in thy business, and, for a time, shall be known only as one necessary to thy affairs in a legal way. When

the time doth be ripe, other matters will take care of themselves."

Two days—of bliss for Charles and his love—were spent in reviewing their former associations. For the time he ceased to be the machine he appeared to others. He was again the ardent lover from whose lips came phrases that would have astonished his senior associates. Again and again they recounted their adventures and the great love they had enjoyed in the long ago.

Then Charles said, "I shall go now to the city, and inform my associates of my decision to accept the hospitality of thy father."

In the city his associates not only were astonished, but very much gratified because their junior partner had established a great business with their client. And the most pleasing feature of the situation, in their estimation, was Charles' invitation to remain at the Hall. This gave the firm a prestige beyond anything it had known before.

Charles explained nothing to them of the real motive for the move. Yet they did not miss seeing the new sparkle in the eyes of him they had thought impervious to emotion.

All that has transpired will, of course, seem strange to the reader. In order to realize how singular matters really were, it is necessary to remember class distinctions were very marked; the daughters of the nobility did not deign to consort with lowly barristers; nor did the nobility receive as an equal one whose parents were farmers in the province.

Charles and Elizabeth were constantly together. They, together, wrought out of Lord Hendon's data plans for the merging of several large estates into what was virtually a small kingdom. Much time and labor were spent in the perfecting of the details. Old laws were perused, precedents were run down, and sufficient material was gathered to form many new ones. The owners of these bodies of land were the descendants of lords, once powerful and enterprising. But now, owing to bad management in some cases, and to degeneracy of the families in others, these estates were fast becoming worthless.

The plan was to force these lands to bear an income whereby the owner of the entire body would derive benefits, also an asset to the nation would be formed. Government officials were consulted, and, through the astute reasonings of Charles, and with the full consent of the owners, these to be properly remunerated for their mortgaged titles, governmental approval was not long delayed.

On these lands were many tenants, most of whom were compelled to work outside the domains where they resided, in order to eke out their meager existence. When at last the governmental sanctions came, Lord Hendon told Charles he was intending to employ an engineer capable of planning some sort of system whereby the lands could more quickly be made productive. Promptly Charles told Lord Hendon the matter should be left in his hands; he would see that all things were done to properly carry on the work.

"But thou art a barrister—not an engineer!" expostulated Lord Hendon.

"I have already made plans. I shall show thee."

Lord Hendon was taken aback by the cleverness of the plans Charles had made. Not a flaw could he find.

"By all the prophets, my good Charles, is there aught thou canst not do?"

"My Lord, the plans are incomplete. When they are done, I shall show thee them," he said, ignoring the compliment.

One point of special interest was the drainage of a low body of very rich land. Through neglect and lack of enterprise of the tenants, a small stream had been permitted to flow in such a way that many acres were flooded. This body could be made sufficiently productive that its surplus earnings might be used for the treatment of other bodies.

It must not be supposed that Charles devoted all his time to his client's affairs. He and his beloved enjoyed many a long walk together through fields and meadows. Many, many times they sat side by side, Elizabeth's head on his shoulder, watching the sun go down. Thus they sat until the twilight shadows lengthened and merged into darkness. Then they would return to the castle, oftimes without saying one word on the way, for there were moments when words were superfluous.

Not a word passed between them as to what they meant to do with their future. They knew the future would take care of itself. They were interested only in the present. Lord Hendon often wondered how the matter would end, but he instinctively knew Charles would see that nothing but that which should happen would occur.

It was unusual for young people to be given the freedom these two were allowed. But Elizabeth's father entertained no fear as to the result of this extraordinary affair. He sensed, too, what he might think of it would make little difference. A higher power than his appeared to be governing matters now. Though he loved his daughter dearly, she had ever been in a way a stranger to him. She had never been like other children.

Two years had passed since Charles' entrance into Hendon Hall. Not once had he made mention of marriage. The maiden's father had witnessed the wonderful love and affection between the two, but he could see no indication of the subject of the nuptials ever being broached. And other suitors had sought the maiden's hand in vain. Hence, as it was the custom for loving fathers to attend to getting their daughters properly wedded, Lord Hendon fancied himself to be in a peculiar situation.

CHAPTER XIV

The Visitor

ONE DAY Charles and Elizabeth were sitting together in a wooded nook which had become one of their favorite resting places. The mild afternoon had passed, and the later hours brought with them a gentle breeze heavily laden with odors of spring. Contentedly they sat close, holding each other's hands and enjoying the moment to the fullest extent.

After one of those long silences that only lovers can understand, Elizabeth said, "Beloved, why dost suppose that we, who were once monarchs, should again meet under the conditions of the present?"

"I can only surmise, my sweetest one. Since we know we live again after each death, it doth seem to me it wouldst not be just shouldst we always be monarchs. There must be others also entitled to rule."

"But if there be others, which of course there must be, there must be many such. And if that be true, there could never be kingdoms sufficient over which to rule. It is not that I have a longing for the pomp and magnificence that once were ours, but the matter doth puzzle me at times."

"It may be that the good God who ruleth over us, hath some plan in which we are to be used to serve His purposes."

"Oh, that must be it. It was thou who hath contrived to bring these lands together in a way to make homes for many people who were homeless. Dost note how contented they all seem now? The harvests are rich, and the tenants grow fat with ease and contentment. Dost know, sometimes I wonder if some of these may not be some of our old people?"

"Hast also thought of that? I, too, have felt at times some of them might be those returned to us to look after."

At this moment a sudden gust of wind brought a rich but peculiar odor—a different odor from any they had previously noticed.

Charles said, "Dost notice anything, my sweet one?"

"Yes. It doth remind me much of the garden in the palace of those years long past."

"Beloved, it is the same mixture of odors which did come to me when the antelope ledst me to thee. Later, I did enjoy this same odor when in thine uncle's garden —the garden that didst become mine and thine."

"Whence dost think it cometh?"

A blue, cloud-like mist now came before them, and from it stepped an elderly man. Both thought his countenance was most beautiful.

Immediately Charles said, "My beloved, this is the same face of which I have spoken to thee. The same countenance didst appear at the seepage when an ante-

lope wast saved from perishing of thirst. This is he who didst lead me away to—I know not where."

"Yea, my son, I am he whom thou knowest," said a rich voice. "I am come to thee in response to thy questionings. Thou hast again found each other, after many years of separation, which hath been in reality but seeming."

"Thou sayest *seeming*. Have not we two been truly apart all these years?"

"Nay. Thou hast been together more than thou knowest. But thy memory of the years between hath been lost for a time. It hath been best for it to be so. None can lose those whom he hath once loved. But for many reasons thy consciousness of some associations may not be recalled at will. More especially if there be little or naught to be gained from such a knowledge. The Divine Law worketh in ways mysterious to men, but it worketh always for the greatest good."

"May we ask who thou art?"

"It doth not matter for the present. There are other things more important for thee to learn now."

"Aye, good sir. There is much we wouldst know. We are yet young, as years are counted now, but that we are to continue as we now behold ourselves, we know is not to be. Canst tell us what it is we must do to fulfill what doth lie before us?"

"Every man seeketh to know the future. And the desire is what will cause him some day to know. But at times some things are withheld, so he may better attend the present. Thou hast observed thou art always prompted

to do what is the best to do. These promptings give thee an aspect of wisdom far beyond thy years, to the consternation of thy friends. Continue thou to be satisfied with this; not all are so benevolently gifted. Rest assured, as thou hast felt within thee, naught canst come to thee but good, if thou wilt ever listen to the voice within thee. Be thou not anxious to know the events to come. And remember always, thou art watched over by those whom thou by thine own good conduct hast contacted."

"May we ask this: art not some of these tenants of our people?"

"Thou hast noticed part of thy tenants have left. New ones have come. This much thou mayest know. Ere thou hast completed thy plans for these estates, many other tenants shall come to thee. The ones who leave do not belong. Thy people need thy loving care, though they shall not know as yet the true conditions. For some years thou shalt continue thy present relationship, during which time thou shalt have conferred great benefits upon thy people. At some time thou shalt again be found together in another land. All is well with thee and thine. Peace be with thee."

As suddenly as he had come the saintly being vanished. The odor from a garden of the past still permeated the air; and this lingering fragrance of bygone years caused the souls of the lovers to yearn over memories of the long ago. These two who loved each other sat long in the silence communing over all that had occurred to them. Over Charles came a desire to hold more closely the hand of his companion, and, as he tightened his

clasp, to his ears came a strain of music, so exquisitely sweet as to seem unearthly.

Opening his eyes, he found his hand was gripping the arm of his chair. The wooded nook, the beloved at his side – all had vanished, though the fragrance he loved so well still lingered, faintly, in the air about him. And, as his consciousness became more alert, even this precious fragrance became less perceptible. Once more he was only Crane, the searcher after the knowledge that is hidden.

It was with an effort he controlled himself. He wished to cry out, to do something to bring back the vision. There was nothing he would not do if only the doing of it would enable him to keep possession of this sublime vision forever. Looking at his watch, he discovered his consciousness had been away a little less than one minute; yet in that brief interval he had lived years. None of the people around him appeared to have noticed his travels into the past. Thus he thought until his glance turned toward Nona, when the expression in her eyes as she smiled at him, caused him to feel she knew.

He now listened while a number of melodies were played on the new instrument. Then he was taken to another chamber, where he saw an apparatus he thought looked something like a radio broadcasting station, though he recognized there were devices he had never seen among broadcasting apparatus. There were rods with fine wires attached, some of which were crossed over others that were placed so as to form a network, though they did not touch each other.

A lever was moved, and a whirring sound indicated a terrific force had been put into operation. This, it was explained, was a machine that extracted *electricity from the upper regions, there being a belt of electricity high above the earth;* and it was further explained, *this machine was as yet unknown to present man,* and because of the inadequacy of the present earth man's mechanical instruments, *man had not yet contacted this belt of electricity.*

Crane exclaimed questioningly, "This will solve the problem of utilizing power without the use of fuel?"

"The fuel question will be solved to some extent before this method will be employed. The apparatus in this corner is a fuel-less engine."

Crane now saw a cylinder which was about four feet in length and twelve inches in diameter. By its side lay another cylinder of the same size. The two were connected by a valve. On one was a pressure gauge that registered fifty pounds, and on the other was another gauge that registered two hundred and fifty pounds.

"The cylinder you see with the fifty pound pressure gauge," said his host, "is supplied with air by this small compressor. As you see, when in the first cylinder, the air has a pressure of only fifty pounds; but, when it enters the other cylinder through the valve between them, it is expanded to a pressure of two hundred and fifty pounds. This small motor supplies the electricity necessary for the heating of the wires. The excess pressure supplies the power necessary for the operation of whatever mechanism may be attached to the plant, and for

the running of the little motor and the air compressor as well."

"How simple," said Crane. "It sounds very much like pulling one's self up by one's own boot-straps. But tell me how it is that when the pressure has gone up to two hundred and fifty pounds in the high pressure cylinder, it does not tend to return to the low pressure cylinder. By all the laws I know, this pressure should have the tendency to equalize itself."

"That is easily explained. The valve you see is a special one. It works in the same manner that an injector works on a steam boiler. As you know, the colder the water, and the higher the steam pressure, the better an injector will work. A check valve in the line prevents the hot water from returning to the cold water tank. Thus it is with this valve, which is really an air injector. The cold air is forced into the high pressure cylinder by the heated air that is ready for it. A small battery will heat it the first time. Once the cylinders have been filled, they need never be empty again. These may be filled the first time with a small bicycle pump. But it is now growing late. We shall take some refreshment, and then you may enjoy yourself as you will."

All went into an adjoining room, where they seated themselves at a table, much in the same manner as in the Valley of the Brotherhood. Dishes and food appeared in the same mysterious way. And when the meal had been finished, Nona told Crane they would now leave and return some other time.

After they had climbed down the spiral stairway, and were once more on their way back to the valley, Nona addressed Crane in her low, musical voice.

"There are some questions you would like to ask?"

"Several," agreed Crane. "In the first place, you knew I had been given another glimpse of the past?"

"Yes."

"Why was not the picture allowed to complete itself more fully this time?" His voice betrayed an emotion he found difficulty in curbing. "I do not understand the reason for letting me see up to the time when things were becoming interesting, and then shutting the memory off."

"You really know there is a reason, though you may not realize what the reason is. A little meditation on the matter would show you one reason. It has created in you a great desire. That very longing produces a condition between you and the thing desired, that will, ultimately, be productive of results which have been planned from the beginning. More than this, it is not necessary to explain at this time."

"Ah, I begin to see. But there is one thing connected with this last experience that seems to be somewhat inconsistent with what has gone before. When Aloysius was in the garden of the palace he was told he would lose all memory of the past for a time. That time elapsed. Many existences had been lived by this couple, though none of them were remembered. Then—"

Nona interrupted. "This particular existence was given to Charles for the same purpose it has been given to

you today. It is through desire that all is accomplished. The noblest attainments have been accomplished through intense desire."

"I gather, then, the time is not far distant when I shall see her, whom I have come to regard with a most intense longing?"

"Perhaps. How soon, however, depends upon many things. You remember the prophecy. It was to be soon after the antelope had left a maiden's side and laid its muzzle in your hand. That event has occurred. Your patience is again to be tried. It is not necessary to tell you, impatience will but retard matters."

"But you have said the desire is necessary. Did you not say the longing will bring about certain necessary conditions?"

"Yes. But one may yearn with calm and poise and thereby hasten the realization. Or one may become overanxious, and thus retard the culmination for which he yearns."

"I have been told others have been permitted to remember much sooner than I? Why are others more privileged than I?"

"The reason will unfold to you in time. There is no need of haste to know this."

"Then I may expect other experiences, before the time for the full awakening arrives? I feel as I have felt when reading a story in serial form. Each installment but adds to the desire for the final chapter."

"There will be other experiences. You are now on your way to experience something of real interest."

The two had emerged from the little valley through which they had made their way to the tower. They had walked but a few steps beyond the steep incline when, it seemed to him, they stepped into another world.

In a great enclosure many people were seated in rows where they could look down into what was about to occur in the central part of the arena. A number of horses champed at their bits. Crane knew at once a tournament was being held. There was much shouting and bandying of comments and repartee among the spectators. The riders, their lances now and then reflecting the sunlight in spots of dazzling white, their plumes waving with the breeze, seemed to be impatiently waiting for the signal to begin.

At last, when all was ready, a trumpet blast sounded through the air, and the hazardous sport was on. Time after time horses and riders came together with sickening thuds. Time after time horses and riders were thrown to the ground. The excitement of the spectators was expressed in roars of approval as a heavy knight conquered one adversary after another. When the last joust was over, the victor bent his knee before a maiden, who placed upon his brow the victor's crown.

It was plain the maiden had preferred to crown some other knight, but also it was plain the victorious one exulted in the ceremony. The coarse countenance reflected a joy not untinged with vanity over the favor thus bestowed. After arising to his feet, he looked at the maiden with an air of intimacy, whereupon she turned her face away in disgust. This drew a baleful glare from

him who had been crowned the victor. And he was about to speak rudely to her, in reprisal for her thus showing her dislike in public, when the blare of a trumpet caused him to look behind him.

At the entrance was a strange knight, tall and straight, and seated upon a great black horse, whose coat glistened in the sunlight like a fine satin. Slowly the rider trotted his horse to the center of the enclosure; and such were the grace and dignity of both horse and rider, one could but think they were one. Without haste or nervousness, the stranger paused. From all sides could be heard exclamations of anticipation.

"The 'Masked Knight'! What doeth he here?"

Astonished exclamations and queries burst forth from the spectators. None here had before seen the 'Masked Knight', though many had heard rumors concerning a mysterious knight of unusual prowess who had been seen in different places. Stories of his strength and courage had been repeated until a great personage had been created of him who now paused before the people. When the murmurings had ceased, the stranger spoke in a voice at once rich, deep and mellow.

"Though not entered here as a contestant, and tardy though I be in my arrival, I wouldst take the crown from yonder head, if it be the pleasure of the king and the people."

Since in those days it was not customary to include any but the king in the asking of a favor, in other circumstances the manner in which the stranger's request was put would doubtless have been deemed an impertinence.

But in their excitement, all, even His Majesty, overlooked the breach of etiquette.

It was the privilege of the victor to refuse another combat that might endanger his already won laurels. But, naturally, the consensus of opinion would be that a courageous victor would welcome strife that would more firmly seat upon his brow the symbol of his prowess. As rumors had it, the newcomer was no mean adversary, and to bring defeat upon the audacious fellow would indeed give something upon which to base greater pride.

The stranger had cast his challenge. One and all awaited the victorious one's decision. For a moment the victor hesitated; then he turned to the king, and, bowing, said:

"If it be His Majesty's wish, it will please me to silence forever yon braggart's speech, and to dispel the rumors that hath been current as to his might."

The king bowed his assent, and the people yelled their approval. Here was something that was about to overshadow all previous entertainment.

The clamor suddenly ceased, for the wearer of laurels signified his desire to say more.

"I wouldst have it known I am unashamed of my face, and shalt go forth to battle with it uncovered. Darest this fellow who hath come with such imprudence to say the same?"

The stranger answered, "Hast thou the desire to see the face of him who is to conquer thee?"

That taunt enraged the churlish one almost beyond his ability to control himself. "I desire nothing of thee,

thou who smirkest behind a renown given thee by fools who listed to old women's tales. Naught from thee wilt I take!"

"'Tis well," replied the other calmly. "When thou hast conquered me, thou shalt be at liberty to lift the mask thou hast mocked."

"Let us be at it then!" bellowed the disgruntled one.

The blast of a trumpet shattered the air, and the strife began. Long after the other contests would be forgotten, this combat between the crowned victor and the mysterious stranger would be remembered. Twice both combatants were nearly unseated as they rushed together with terrific force. But the third time the burly one was unseated, and was felled to the ground. Sorely hurt, the vanquished one was carried away.

The one who had triumphed, instead of waiting to be crowned, rode off without saying a word. Never before had such a thing been done. Never before had a victor been known to refuse the crown that was justly his. Many were the exclamations of disappointment. It was commented that even the king had been affronted by this act of the stranger. But the act added to the man's fame.

Rumors began to increase regarding the stranger's might and power. His utter disregard of danger, and his indifference to honors contributed much to his renown. What was his object? What profit could there be in demonstrating his prowess without reward?

Humanity has ever been so. The unusual excites comment. If there be a tendency on the part of an individ-

ual to preserve a certain amount of secrecy, this very tendency will have the effect of advertising whatever it is desired not to advertise. The surest method of exciting public opinion is to present the appearance of a desire to the contrary.

At last, so great was the clamor to know more about the mysterious stranger, subterfuge was used to bring him within the range of those who desired to know him more. It was not a difficult matter to formulate the necessary plans. A few knights gathered together, and, after a prolonged discussion, approached the burly one who had been worsted in the tournament. Having in his heart a desire for revenge against the one who had deprived him of the honors he had won, he readily consented to make a formal charge against the stranger. The vindictive one accused the masked knight of being an outlaw and a robber.

Though the king sensed a plot was afoot, His Majesty himself craved to know more about this curious person, and his desire led him to offer a reward for the capture of the stranger. He made a condition that the man be brought in alive and unhurt. The king, of course, inserted this condition to assuage his conscience, which bothered him somewhat because he knew he had acceded to an arrangement which was not altogether sound. He intended to see that no harm came to the man from it.

Soon the news went forth that the 'Masked Knight' was accused of being a robber and was to be hunted down. This, instead of casting a shadow upon his glam-

orous reputation, only added a dash of color to it. More tales were told of his invincibility, and it was conjectured that those who went in search of him would fare badly.

CHAPTER XV

Vindication and Duels

A FORTNIGHT later, a messenger came to the king's castle, and demanded an audience with the king himself. He said he bore a message he must deliver to His Majesty in person. And after he had delivered this message and departed, the king unrolled the parchment and read these words:

SIRE:

Rumor hath it that thou hast set a price upon my person, and that the charge is that I am a robber. I doubt it not that my accuser doth be ready to meet the consequences of his act. Knowing thou to be a just monarch, I fearlessly place myself in thy hands. I am at this moment on my way to thee, and shall deliver myself to thee in person, under the condition that I mayest, in accordance with the laws, be brought face to face with my accuser, and that I be permitted to preserve the personal privilege of retaining my mask under all circumstances. A messenger will arrive on the morrow for thy answer.

THE MASKED KNIGHT

Summoning another messenger, the king sent for those who had suggested the accusation. When they had presented themselves, he read the message to them and said:

"This is a message from him whom thou hast accused. The writer thereof feareth not his accusers. What he hath demanded in return for his delivery of himself is just. See thou to it that these demands are complied with to the letter."

When the knights had retired they looked upon one another with serious faces. Said one, "It seemeth to me we didst think insufficiently upon this matter before forming the accusations against this man. I doubt not there shall be troublous times for those of us who hath been connected with it. This man feareth nothing. What is to be done?"

"Let us be off to Sir Herley, and with some caution. He shall be made to tell he alone carrieth the blame, since 'twas he who didst make the accusations."

Sir Herley, the knight who had been worsted at the tournament, was as gullible as he was coarse. It took but little astute prompting to work him up into a rage that made him bellow: "I shall cross swords with this masked braggart, doth he show himself. I shall accuse him, for if he be not a robber, why doth he wear a mask? And since he didst not wish the crown at the tournament, why didst he enter? It seemeth plain he hath held me as an enemy."

"Or perhaps he hath his mind on the Lady Hellen?" suggested one of the knights.

This last remark made the heavy man purple with anger.

"Shouldst the upstart so much as smile at the Lady Hellen, I shall spit him as I wouldst a goose!"

Sir Herley's infatuation for the fair Lady Hellen long had been a subject for discussion in knightly circles. The Lady's evident dislike of him excited further comment, though no one dared mention her aversion in his presence. Sir Herley was a powerful factor, and the other knights, for this reason, avoided Lady Hellen, although many a young knight secretly longed for her smiles. He professed to ignore her dislike and, on more than one occasion let it be known he considered her already his own. And the Lady Hellen, because she knew her father was forced, due to various circumstances, to be friendly toward him, refrained from openly antagonizing her unwelcome suitor.

As for the other knights who had gathered at the moment, matters could not have turned out more to their liking. This man, whom they secretly detested, would take all the responsibility for the affair they had originated. Hence, when they left the castle of Sir Herley, they were well contented with themselves. They felt they had been very clever indeed.

The following day a horseman presented himself at the gates of the castle and sent word to the king that he was the messenger of the masked knight. The message was given to the king and the horseman departed. Two days later the masked knight rode boldly into the courtyard and requested an audience with the king. The

audience was readily granted, and he was soon before the monarch.

"Sire, thou beholdeth me before thee, according to thy desires. Wilt thou confront me with those who accuseth me?"

"Thy wishes shall be gratified, Sir Knight, even as it hath been promised unto thee."

An order was dispatched and Sir Herley was brought before the king. The court was now filled with lords and ladies, who were curious to see the masked knight, and to witness how such a situation could be managed.

The king began: "Sir Herley, it is the privilege of the accused to be confronted by his accuser. The accused hath, of his own accord, come before us to be convicted or expurged of that of which he hath been accused. We are ready for what thou shalt say against this man."

"Sire, I believe this to be no knight, but a robber who preyeth upon the defenseless."

"Sir Herley, thy belief availeth nothing. Thou hast accused this man of a crime. It is supposed thou hast sufficient evidence to support thy contention. It is a grave thing to accuse another on a mere belief."

"Sire, it be the talk of the countryside that this man is what I have said."

"Is that all thou hast to support thy accusations?"

Sir Herley was silent.

Then the masked knight spoke: "Sire, I have been falsely accused, as thou hast seen. I beseech thee to grant the permission for mine accuser and myself to settle the dispute betwixt ourselves. 'Tis plain the accuser hath a

grudge that hath caused him to accuse one whom he knoweth not, though that one knoweth him well."

"Thou knowest me, sir?"

"Yea. I knoweth thee well. 'Twas a pleasure to take from thee the crown of victory at the tournament. 'Twill be my pleasure now to pierce thee with my sword as I shouldst a pig."

"Sire!" cried Sir Herley, "I take full responsibility for my accusation. Let me silence once and for all this masked braggart's tongue!"

"Very well." His Majesty spoke sternly, coldly. "Clear a space. We also would see this duel."

A space was cleared, and the two knights drew their swords. At the first onslaught Sir Herley's sword was stricken from his grasp, and he was at the mercy of his adversary. But, though it was the privilege of the one who had gained such an advantage to slap his enemy at his leisure, the anonymous knight made no attempt to profit from his opponent's predicament.

Seeing the stranger's attitude, Sir Herley cried, "Knave, why doest thou not strike? I crave no favors at thy hands."

"I grant thee no favors, Sir Herley. It is no favor to let thee live. Howbeit, if thou art of the same mind, we mayest renew the combat."

In his rage, Sir Herley forgot he now owed his life to his adversary, and he bellowed: "On guard!"

"For shame!" cried more than one.

But Sir Herley heard them not. Not only was he now blind to all sense of decency, he was also deaf to ridicule. His consuming desire was to annihilate this enemy who

had taken from him all that was worth having. Again were heard the vicious sounds of blade parrying blade. It could easily be seen the stranger was now cooly playing with his antagonist. The masked one disported and led the other this way and that, until Sir Herley's great chest heaved with his terrific breathing.

Finally, Sir Herley, seeing an opening his antagonist had purposely left for him, lunged in, to find himself pierced through the shoulder. With a curse and a groan, he fell back upon the floor, where he lay panting and bleeding.

The masked knight approached his recumbent enemy, and said, "Thou art yet spared. But I wouldst ask thee a question. It is my belief others besides thou art also guilty of casting the shadow of crime upon the masked knight. Is't not true, others hath imposed upon thy passions and aroused thine ire, to cause thee to make accusations against me? Is it not thus I have been brought before thee for the purpose of this combat?"

"I tell thee, I alone am responsible."

"Thou shalt do well to answer my questions, Sir Herley. Remember, I have said I knowest thee well. I knowest thee much better than doth anyone else present."

These words, and the tone in which they were spoken, brought a look of fear into the face of the fallen knight.

"Well then, 'tis true. 'Twas told me thou wert a robber. I was glad to receive such tidings."

"Yea. I knowest that already. But tell me the names of those knights who have deigned to dishonor their knighthood by such foul methods."

A great commotion now started, for the conspirators had not anticipated this turn of matters. How had he guessed others had played a part in the affair? Three very disquieted knights looked at each other with blanched faces.

Before the fallen knight could make reply, the stranger said, "Nay, do not speak aloud. I shall approach thee closer and thou shalt whisper it to me. I wouldst deal with these in mine own way."

Kneeling upon the floor, he received from the wounded one the names of the others. These he wrote upon a piece of parchment. When he had finished, he said:

"There be some who mask under the name of knight, though the title of knave wouldst be better suited to them. Those whose names I have here writ shall seek me before nightfall without fail, and woe be it to him who faileth me in this."

One of the three knights, somewhat bolder than the others, ventured to retort in a superior tone, "Thou speakest as one in command. Where is thy authority for such a summons?"

"My authority is here." With these words the stranger threw his gauntlet at the bold one's feet and drew his sword.

There was nothing else for the challenged knight to do but to draw his own sword and prepare for conflict. The two blades clashed but three times; then the challenger with a quick lunge and twist broke off the blade of his adversary at the hilt. But, instead of pressing on to finish the combat, the victor, again acting magnani-

mously, bowed to the defeated one, and with a gesture that would have done credit to a king, motioned the chagrined knight to be gone.

"Now, if there be others who deem it wise to ask further questions, 'twill give me great happiness to answer them."

Not a word was said in response to his calmly spoken invitation, but a murmur ran through the court. Who could the stranger be? Had there ever before been one so brave, yet so wondrously generous? Whether he were challenged or challenger, it was the same. 'Twas plain he would not be trifled with, yet he was not brutish, while his manner bespoke refinement and gentle breeding.

The king said, "Sir Knight, we wouldst know thee better. Canst thou not give the reason for thy conduct, and thy mask? Thy bravery and generosity shouldst not always go unrewarded."

"Sire, it was a part of the bargain that I shouldst keep the mask. My innocence of the charges against me hath been proven. I pray thee to let me go. Thou canst refer to me as the 'Masked Knight'. The time hath not come, if it be ever to come, for my mask to be taken away."

"Thy wishes shall be respected, Sir Knight. If there be aught within our power we mayest do to assist thee, thou hast only to request it. Peace be with thee."

Bowing low before the king, the knight left the court and, mounting his horse, rode away.

Later, he who had ridden behind the masked knight as armor bearer, was seen to approach the discomfitted trio.

"Thou who servest yon masked knight, tell us where doth he expect us?"

"At the entrance to the woods to the north of Sir Herley's castle."

"Tell thy master we shall be there."

The sun was going down and the long twilight had begun, when three knights were seen approaching the entrance to the wood, as they had been bid. When they reached the appointment place, they found their host awaiting them. He was seated on his great black horse, and both horse and rider were as motionless and silent as if they had been cut out from solid rock.

"Thou art in good time, Sirs. Be pleased to follow me."

The masked knight and his visitors plunged deeper into the wood; and soon they were within an enclosure in the center of which stood a house of a dark and gloomy appearance.

"Dismount and follow me," came the order.

The visitors walked warily through a dark hall. Presently they found themselves in a large room where a cheerful fire burned upon the grate. A servant silently lit several candles. The three knights could see the furnishings were simple indeed, but comfortable. Three-legged stools with backs and a large table occupied the center of the room. The masked knight bade his visitors be seated.

"I have bid thee to come to me here, and thou hast done well to obey. Thou hast made the attempt to fasten upon me a crime, without full thought upon what the consequences mightst be, either to me or unto thyselves.

Herein thou hast erred, and now thou must pay for the error. I have brought thee here to tell thee, thou shalt come to me when I shall bid thee. See to it that nothing shall prevent thy obedience to my summons."

Seeing a look upon the face of one, he forestalled the question.

"I shall be most happy to answer any questions thou art prepared to ask." This was said in a tone that caused a chill in the hearts of the three.

A momentary silence ensued.

"Seeing there is nothing ye wouldst know, I give thee permission to depart. I require nothing more of thee, at this time. The reason for thy coming was that thou mightst have more surely impressed upon thee the necessity of thy unqualified obedience."

Bowing low, he pointed toward the door, much as a master would inform a servant of his service being no longer required. Bowing in return, the three knights took their departure. Silently they rode until they had passed the entrance to the wood.

Here one of them said, "What think ye? Dost seem we are the servants of this haughty fellow?"

Another answered, "Aye, and he seemeth to have the air of taking that which he wisheth. Never before have I thought I could fear any man, but all the while we sat in that house I didst feel danger in the air. How is't he hath a house almost within call of the castle grounds? 'Tis most strange we have not heard of the place before."

"Hark ye," said the third knight. "There be troublous

times before us. We must sever the bondage this fellow hath placed upon us."

"What lieth in thy mind?" queried the first speaker. "'Tis plain we couldst have rushed him in his house, but something seemeth to warn 'twould have ended badly for us."

"He wieldeth a clever blade. I know a Frenchman who hath the name of the best blade in Europe. Let us bargain with him to come to visit with us. Perhaps a way will be found to force a duel."

"Thou art clever!" exclaimed the second knight.

"Let us dispatch a messenger at once," said the other.

Hurriedly a message was written extending an invitation to Monsieur Pierrot, the famous duelist and master of fencing, to visit in England for a fortnight or so, the purpose being the intent of several knights to take lessons in fencing in preparation for an emergency that was expected. Invitations of such a nature were not unusual in the life of Monsieur Pierrot, but the message was couched in a manner most pleasing to the vanity of the great swordsman. The answer brought back was gratifying to the conspirators. It looked very much as if affairs were about to be more to their liking.

In due time Monsieur Pierrot arrived with full equipment of fencing blades, masks, and other paraphernalia necessary for the tutoring of the knights who had so honored him. With these knights as his friends, who could tell what might happen? He would do everything possible to please them.

Upon his arrival, the Frenchman was more than a little surprised at the exceedingly agreeable manner in which he was welcomed. He had not expected such personal friendliness. He was invited to this affair and that with such enthusiasm, it was no wonder he felt his fame must have traveled far.

Lessons were arranged for and much time was spent in preliminary instructions. It was after several days had passed that one of the knights approached the Frenchman, and told him of a swordsman who had so imposed upon him he was fearful a duel was the only way out of a serious predicament. His opponent, he further related, was so greatly superior to himself in swordsmanship, it would culminate in nothing short of death to himself if he made the challenge. A few cleverly conducted interviews soon aroused Monsieur Pierrot's sympathy, to the extent he became very desirous of assisting his knightly friend. Through the suggestion, subtly put to be sure, of another of the conspirators, it was not long before the famed swordsman had offered to challenge the enemy.

"But supposing this man shouldst be as great a swordsman as rumor hath it?"

This clever query had the desired effect.

Instantly the Frenchman answered, "Sir, there is no better blade in all Europe than thy Pierrot. Fear not, but let us find a way to meet this knight."

"'Tis well," said another. "We wouldst not see thee harmed, now that we have grown to love thee as our own."

Naturally, this flattery had upon the impetuous Frenchman the full effect it was intended to have. Such phrases coming from knightly lips soon bore fruit in the form of a message sent to the entrance of the wood where the trio had been received by the masked knight.

It may have been coincidence that a horse and rider waited there, as if someone were expected.

"Thou hast a message for my master?" asked the waiting one.

"Aye. For the masked knight."

"Pass it to me. I shall take it to him. Await me here for thy answer."

Within the hour the messenger returned and delivered a piece of parchment containing the answer. The knights gathered around him and asked for details of the errand. This was briefly told. For some reason, the elation the knights had felt left them. There was something uncanny about the way the mysterious knight met every challenge, whether it be of much import or merely trivial.

"Let us read the message," said one of the conspirators.

"Aye . . ." The voice of the one who had suggested the plan sounded dubious.

The Frenchman tore apart the seal. Monsieur Pierrot's face, while he was reading the missive became a study of mixed emotions.

Sir:

Thy challenge hath been received. 'Tis shameful that so famous a blade is to lose that which can never be restored, because of the flatteries

of three knaves who have preyed upon thy good intentions. I shall meet thee at the dawn at the entrance to the wood. Tell thy friends they shall all be present. This is a command.

The Masked Knight

The note sounded much like a chiding offered by an adult to a child. Rage of an intensity he had scarce known before filled the Frenchman. The contents of the letter had the effect of bringing to his mind many artful flatteries, the memory of which seemed to whisper to him he had been made a tool. The ulterior motives behind the invitation to visit England, and behind all that had taken place here from the moment of his arrival, became more and more apparent to Monsieur Pierrot. He read aloud the message, then looked at the knights before him. Now his suspicions assumed definite form, because he could see the guilt which showed in every line of their faces.

"So . . ." he said softly. "Much hath been made clear to me. 'Tis too late to retreat with honor. When I have finished with the masked knight, I shall have a word with ye all." Turning to his servant, he said, "Remove our belongings from the castle. Tonight we sleep in the woods."

The three knights were now crestfallen indeed. Their enemy had balked them at every turn. What evil fate had come upon them that a thoughtless prank should carry in its wake such dire consequences?

The next morning at dawn the French duelist and master-swordsman was seen to approach the entrance to the wood; and from another direction the three knights were seen to approach the entrance. The masked knight sat at ease on his charger awaiting them. He bade all to follow him, then led them into the enclosure where he had brought the three knights on the first occasion.

"Thou mayest all dismount," he ordered calmly.

When all had dismounted, the masked knight addressed the Frenchman, "Sir, there is yet time to withdraw the challenge thou hast sent. Though this be not the custom, I wouldst warn thee it is best for thee to rescind. Thou now knowst these knaves have made of thee a plaything. For this they must answer to me. What sayest thou?"

"Sir, know thee this. It hath not been my custom to withdraw a challenge once made, nor shall I withdraw this one. When I have finished with thee, I myself shall deal with these who attire themselves in knightly clothes and honors. On guard, Sir Knight! I wouldst try thy far-famed blade."

"So be it, Sir. On guard!"

CHAPTER XVI

The Meeting of the Swordsmen

THE COMBAT which followed was one the three knights would not forget as long as they lived. One of them said it was almost worth the losing of one's life to have the thrill of seeing this marvelous exhibition. From the first crossing of the blades, the rhythm and perfection with which the combatants feinted, parried, and pointed was equaled only by the grace and agility of their footwork. Side-stepping, retreating, advancing – every movement was grace itself. Each, it appeared, was called upon to bring into operation his utmost skill and all the tactics at his command.

But within a short time the beholders saw the masked knight was advancing steadily, while, plainly, the famous duelist was exerting all his strength and agility to escape immediate and ignominious defeat. A little later it dawned on the watching knights that Monsieur Pierrot was being played with as a cat would play with a mouse. Then came the sudden dexterous lunge and twist they knew so well. They saw the Frenchman's blade tossed from his grasp. Like a quivering shaft of light it fell to the sand, vibrating with the impact before it lay still.

The Frenchman folded his arms and waited. But his adversary did not advance upon him. Instead, the masked knight said:

"Sir, it hath been an honor to engage thee in combat. Thou art without an equal."

"Except thyself, Sir Knight. I am as a child in thy hands. I knew not there lived a man like thee."

"Say it not. I am not thy competitor. Thou shalt keep thy fame. None need ever know of this encounter. These fine fellows who brought thee here darest not speak of it."

"Sir, thou art magnanimous as well as proficient. I shall not forget thy greatness! And I am almost in the mood to forgive these varlets who mask as knights, for they have given me the privilege of meeting thee. May I know thee better?"

"Leave these gentlemen to me. Ere I have done with them, they will be sufficiently punished. Thou shalt hear of me anon. Peace be with thee."

When the Frenchman had left, the masked knight turned to the trio who waited.

"Again I admonish ye, when I call thou shalt appear. This second affair of thine hath more strongly bound the fetters which ye at first drew about ye. Thus it is ever with him who doth err. The more he trieth to hide his error, the more errors he doth commit, and the deeper he doth enmesh himself in that from which he wouldst escape. Thou shalt now return and await whatsoe'er is to befall thee."

Slowly the perturbed knights withdrew.

"Didst ever know of such happenings? Here we be, knights; and, though knights we be, mere serfs are we. Why can we not be unbound from the chains cast about us?"

"Aye, e'en death I crave instead of this. And yet, when methinks of advancing against this man, there cometh a fear which is not the fear of death. There doth be some sorcery here, I warrant ye. Do ye all feel that which I feel?"

"Aye," agreed one of the others. "Something doth warn 'tis a danger worse than death one doth invite when he displeaseth this mysterious person. And he hath a wisdom that doth be uncanny. He seemeth to know things as truly as if he hadst seen them."

"Aye," echoed the third. "Didst thou take note, when our messenger didst arrive with the Frenchman's note, this man was already there, as if our note-bearer were expected?"

"Truly it doth seem the man is in league with Satan himself. But what remaineth for us to do?"

Thus conversing, the knights rode on to the king's castle. Here they found an air of excitement pervading the place. They had forgotten this was the day appointed by the king for the contest of the archers. Archers were gathered from throughout the kingdom to compete for the victor's crown. To be known as the most proficient among many competitors was an honor much desired. And there was much bustle and confusion as preparations were being made for the great event.

When all arrangements had been completed, the archers took their places before the target that stood at a distance. After hours had been spent in the contest, most of the competitors had been eliminated; and the field was left to a few of the more expert. When only two were left and the excitement was running high indeed, a masked horseman approached a place near where the contestants stood.

Forgotten was the contest. Forgotten in an instant were the events which had precipitated the excitement of the assembled people prior to this moment. Attention was now centered upon the lately arrived horseman, who, when he had ridden to a point behind the archers, reined his horse and waited.

"The 'Masked Knight'! He cometh in good time," one said. "Dost think he hath come to take the victory from the victor?"

Said another, "'Tis not known if he is an *archer,* but it doth be known he is a swordsman of the best."

"Methinks he could use the bow and arrow with any of them. Dost think there be an archer brave enough to challenge him?"

All this, and other not overly kind remarks, could be heard both by the archers who remained to try their skill, and by those who had been vanquished. The defeated ones rather hoped the newcomer would be drawn into the contest. If he won, the humiliation of their successful rivals would be a sop to their pride. The arrogance of the two who had been victorious over all their competitors caused them to determine they would stop this

foolish chatter. How else could they stop it except by challenging the horseman? This the victor would do as soon as the contest between them was over.

Hence the one who remained as victor addressed the horseman, "Dost care to try thy marksmanship with me, good sir?"

"Why dost challenge me? Hath it been told the masked knight is accustomed to the bow?"

"It hath been said thou art here to wrest the victory from the victor. I wouldst put a stop to such gibberish. I wouldst show these talkative ones Donald Lee feareth no man in honest combat with the bow. If thou art not skilled, thou mayest silence all that hath been said. But if thou art, I wouldst have it said I have left no doubt behind me."

"Very well, then. Provide me with a bow."

This was done; and when the knight had tested the bow by pulling the string far enough back to almost break the wood, he smiled in satisfaction.

"Thy target is too near for real skill," he said. "Move it a few paces farther back."

This was done, and again the knight spoke.

"Thou shalt begin. I will follow thee."

The archer strung his bow and let his arrow speed its way almost to the center of the target. Two more arrows followed the first.

"Thou hast done well," said the knight, "but thou hast lost thine arrows."

The three arrows of the knight were shot. When those who acted in the capacity of judges approached

the target, they gasped their wonder, for they saw each of Donald Lee's arrows had been neatly split from notch to head.

Motioning the judges to stand aside, the knight again drew his bow. One arrow pierced the exact center of the target. The second split the shaft of the first ere it imbedded itself beside the first. The third did the same for the second and took its place snugly beside the other two.

Exclamations of astonishment arose on every side, and a number of the onlookers hurried toward the knight, whether to satisfy their curiosity by getting a closer view, or with the intention of engaging him in conversation. But he turned his horse and rode leisurely away.

The three who had been guilty of conspiring against him looked at one another in consternation. They had felt their enemy would be victorious, though a faint hope had been theirs that he might be the loser in this trial. Now they gloomily thought it was useless for anyone to compete with him in anything. They were truly in the power of an invincible foe.

One said, "Didst note his authoritative manner of speech. 'Tis always his air. He commanded the archer to do his wishes, and none thought to disobey him. Something is afoot here I wot not of."

"Aye, he hath a way with him. I wouldst fain follow him, and he be not our enemy. 'Twould be an honor to follow such a man."

"True. And 'tis plain he is honorable. He asketh nothing. There hath been nothing but fairness in him."

"And yet he is our enemy."

"True. But hold. We say he doth be our enemy, yet he hath not injured us, e'en though he knoweth we have conspired against him. All he hath done is to tell us we are to obey him when he commandeth."

"Again true. But when he doth command– –? Thou art as thou wert before. Naught untoward hath come to me. 'Tis our fear concerning what mayest be required of us—aye, this giveth us great unease."

The conversation was interrupted by the advent of a horseman who rode toward them and did not rein his horse until he was in their midst.

Then he said, "My master, the masked knight, hath bidden the three knights to follow me."

Without an instant's hesitation, they obeyed.

"Perhaps we shall now know something of the ordeal which lieth before us. I like not this suspense. It wouldst surely be a relief to know what is to befall us."

"Let us ask his servant if there be aught he canst tell us." The speaker urged his horse ahead until he was beside the messenger, whom he started to question. "Canst tell us aught of thy master that we wouldst know?"

The messenger shook his head. "Nothing. And thou art to find what thou shalt learn, thou shalt not speak of."

This statement did not add to the comfort of the three. It seemed to them every word contained in itself something ominous.

When at last they reached the enclosure they had before visited, they dismounted and went inside the strange house. There, before the huge fireplace, stood their host with his elbow on the mantlepiece. He looked as if he were in deep thought. It seemed to them his eyes glowed as they looked at the trio, and the impression was intensified by the mask which hid his features.

He commanded his guests to be seated, and they promptly obeyed.

"Thou art prompt, which is well. I have sent for thee to give thee instructions for thy future conduct. Ye have now found a change in thy thinking of him who is called the masked knight. Whilst the three of ye were conversing as to thy fate under the dictates of him whom thou hast so far regarded as thine enemy, thou hast been fearfully concerned. It is ever thus with man. He feareth that which he doth not understand – that which lieth unknown to him. But the man who knoweth himself to be free from all blame, feareth nothing, even that which he knoweth not. A little thought, when for the moment ye were free from this fear, and ye were almost convinced the masked knight seemed, after all, to be not such an evil character. This was why the messenger didst approach thee at such time."

The faces of the three showed plainly there was much they would like to ask, but their thoughts of what they had already experienced as a result of their interrogating this man of mystery, deterred them from voicing what lay on their minds.

Seeing this, he said, "Fear not. Ye may now ask what ye will, for I see ye are puzzled overmuch by what thou hast seen and heard."

"Then we are to understand thou art no longer our enemy?" queried one.

"In truth I have never been an enemy, but a friend. This whole matter hath been but for a purpose, part of it being that we mightst become better known each to the others. There doth be much for ye to learn, and it be best that it come in small doses, so all mayest be well remembered."

"How is it that thou seemest to be prepared for any forthcoming event?"

The masked knight smiled. "Knowledge appeareth not always to be wisdom. However, one may be oversurfeited with knowledge, and it be not wisdom if he maketh no use of it. Thou hast all the knowledge that be necessary, but the use of it all hath not come to thee. Nor, for that matter, to any man. Albeit, there doth be one now and then who doth use more of his knowledge than do others of theirs. One who liveth much alone, and hath learned, is easily able to forsee what others not so thoughtful may do under those conditions which presseth them. Such an one doth not be a seer nor a sorcerer. He useth only that which he knoweth already, but doth not know that he knoweth."

"But it hath seemed to us that thou hast, at times, been enabled to tell that which we were thinking."

"It seemeth that to thee as the result of that which hath already been said. Shouldst ye find a man engaged

in that which ye wouldst know of, in thy mind take the fellow's place, and think what 'twould be likely he would think. With plenty of time, and the task be not too heavy, 'twould not be so difficult to learn what he wouldst do or think."

"It seemeth, sir, thou hast the wisdom of kings. Before we found thee on this visit, which thou didst demand of us, we talked of how 'twould be a happiness to serve with thee, and hadst thou not been our enemy. Since thou hast proclaimed us free from thine enmity, let us offer thee our services, and it be thy pleasure to accept them."

"This hath been expected of thee. For this reason thou hast been summoned at this hour. The time doth be ripe for that which is to come. It will please thee to follow me."

Now the masked knight lifted a trap door by means of an iron ring, and preceded his visitors down a spiral stair. After many windings which were made with much caution because of their host's feeble candle light, the trio found themselves in a small chamber which was lighted by means of several great candles in high candlesticks. They saw their host approach the only door, a large oaken one, with great iron straps for hinges.

As he neared the door, it opened, apparently of its own accord. He beckoned them to follow. Now they were in a very large chamber, and this room was elegantly furnished and beautifully lighted. At a sign from their host they seated themselves. Then the light began to grow dimmer and dimmer, until at last there ap-

peared to be only a very faint glow in which nothing could be distinguished from anything else. Then, suddenly, the lights came on again, and to their astonishment, they saw the room was filled with men who were armed as if ready for battle.

They continued to look around them, and now the chamber appeared to be much larger, so large it seemed it was big enough to hold an entire army, for such seemed to be standing at attention within its walls. The masked knight now sat behind a large table upon which were many papers, some of which seemed to be plans, maps, and sketches. While he thus sat, he was busily engaged in sorting various papers into different bundles, which he tied with ribbons.

At intervals he looked up, and his eyes focused upon an officer of high rank, who immediately stepped forward and very respectfully received a bundle of the papers. This process continued until each of the principal officers had received a bundle of papers. Then all the armed men quietly withdrew; and, when all had gone, the chamber seemed to be of its former proportions. The atmosphere of military proceedings had vanished.

CHAPTER XVII

The Annihilation

THE THREE KNIGHTS looked at one another, as if each wished to be certain he had not been dreaming. There was something mysterious, indeed, afoot. What could it all mean? Their masked knight seemed to be a much greater personage than they had suspected. But how could men in such numbers appear and disappear without noise, as these had done? And why had such an army of men been brought together? Many other questions flitted through their minds as they awaited further developments.

At length the masked knight said to them, "Thy questions are soon to be answered. Thou hast seen soldiers who have pledged themselves to uphold the right, in this and in all other lands, without other reward than that which cometh of a labor well performed. None of these but be the bravest of the brave; each would risk his life or give it freely in the fulfillment of this pledge. The question of individual honors or possessions hath long since departed from them. They care naught for things of this world; their aspirations are those of the saints who have gone before them. He who decideth

not to enlist, may be free to return whence he came, and he shall not again be troubled by the masked knight. But once he hath decided to join this army for the right, there shall be no way for him to be released. Ye shall be left alone for a time, that ye may decide as ye wilt. See that ye make no mistakes."

The masked knight withdrew, and the three proceeded to discuss the weighty matter.

"Well, how now, good sirs? It seemeth to me we have forsooth entered the lion's den, though the lion himself be that friendly I find naught to fear."

"And he hath given us the choice of returning, with naught to fear from him further. This giveth me such relief I fain wouldst fall down and thank the dear God for such deliverance. So terrible were the broodings that sometimes came upon me, it did seem I wouldst go mad. And yet, I wish not to go hence. There is that which convinceth me this be a man of God, and that those who follow him will need to pay little heed to their own affairs; these will be taken care of for them. What sayest thou, Sir John?"

"It seemeth to me very little else need be said. We three, through a foolish, nay, a very childish prank, didst bring upon ourselves that which hath made it cost us dearly. Not for a kingdom wouldst I have o'er me again that which hath been like to drive me to my death. And yet, it hath all been of our own making. This masked knight, and it be remembered, hath not sought honors, nor gain. Bethink thee, he hath yet injured no man, except it be, mayhap, Sir Herley hath

suffered in his pride. I trow there must have been reason sufficient for that. Sir Herley doth be an abominable ass, though he doth be high in the king's favor and mighty in battle. It seemeth to me, sweet sirs, we art all of one mind. Let us pledge ourselves to this knight, though I wouldst have two pledges. Though we enter the service of this man, let us also each pledge to succor the other two when occasion demands. We three pledged to the knight, but also to each other. Since we have blundered together, let us continue our fortunes together. What sayest ye?"

"Bravely spoken, Sir John. And thou, Sir Henry? Nay, the look on thy face betrayeth thee. Thou art of the same mind. Hold, I am reminded of something. Didst not he whom we call the masked knight say it be not difficult to read men's minds, and we exchanged places with him whom we wouldst read? Methinks it hath already begun to work amongst ourselves. Here we be voicing each other's thoughts the whole time, and without knowing it. Already I am enthralled. Are we ready, good sirs?"

"Aye, we are ready. We three together. And all three to the masked knight. When he cometh we shall tell him of our decision."

Scarce had the last word been spoken, when the door opened and the masked knight entered.

"I perceive ye have decided to enter with us. Thou hast chosen wisely. Though it was already known what thy decision would be, yet it was necessary for it to be made as it hath been. Thou hast also done wisely in the

three of ye deciding for the closer comradeship amongst thyselves. It may benefit thee mightily in the adventures which are to come."

"Aye, gentle sir. We have pledged ourselves to thy service, come what may, though we know not yet what that service shall come to be. Howbeit, we are convinced thine doth be a worthy cause. Please thee to command us as thy servants."

"That is well. Soon and ye shall have the adventure ye have desired. Ye shall now be shown thy quarters for the present."

Tapping a bell, the knight summoned a servant, and told the one who responded to show the three knights to their quarters; then, bowing to the newly pledged ones, he passed from the chamber. The servant, after he had led the trio to an upper chamber, in which were three beds, chairs, and other necessary furniture, announced he would be at their service, if they wanted for anything; a tinkle of the bell on the table would summon him. Then he withdrew.

"Well, sirs, we are settled. Mayhap soon we shall know of what lieth before us."

"Sir Miles, how likest the new life? None to wait upon thee but the one servant, who is to serve us all. This seemeth a change, indeed."

For three days the new recruits did much as they liked. They found they were ensconced in an abandoned castle, which either had settled until it was underground or else had been purposely built beneath the surface. The comparatively small building above, so far as they

could see, was the only entrance. Nothing of an adventurous aspect had yet occurred, but they were content to wait. This very contentment puzzled them not a little, for accustomed as they were to be engaged in some kind of activity, they would never have thought they could endure, even for a few days, an existence of such utter passivity.

They had just begun another of their frequent conversations regarding the possibility of soon being astride their steeds in quest of an existence more exciting, when the servant of the masked knight entered and told them their presence was requested by his master. At once they betook themselves to the presence of him to whom they had vowed their allegiance.

The masked knight bade them to be seated, then spoke to them in grave tones: "Sirs, these be troublous times. Upon such as have gathered under the banner thou art sworn to serve, dependeth the safety of England and her people. A crafty monarch of another country hath his plotters here to incite the malcontents to help him seize the throne. The king doth be helpless and knoweth not the danger. And if any man were to tell him, he wouldst not believe, for the knaves have planned with care for some years for what is soon to come to pass. But there doth be means, of which the king and his secret men knoweth not, for the gathering of news of the plotters.

"Thou art now to see why it was that Sir Herley hath been shorn of his popularity. If he hadst been left to his own devices, he wouldst have commanded attention

from the people, whose eyes have now been opened to how thin wast the coat 'neath which he didst hide. But they do not yet know all. Sir Herley doth be one of the leaders of the plotters. He hath turned traitor to his king under promises of honors and riches by him who expecteth to enter as conqueror. With him there are others. These meet on the morrow in a hidden vale for the purpose of setting the day for the assassination of the king. When this hath been done the invaders will come from all directions and take the country by surprise. We are to approach the vale; then whatever desires thou hast for adventures will be fully satisfied, I warrant thee. Now, to horse, and await me at the postern."

Silently the three left the chamber and were soon mounted and waiting. The masked knight gave an order to his man, and made preparations to follow the new recruits. Before his arrival, Sir Miles, the most talkative of the trio, made comment.

"Now this smackest something of that which we like. So—the king doth be in danger. It be now he needeth his brother, the Duke of York, overmuch. Strange how it be he hath disappeared, and no sign of him hath come back to us. 'Tis strange, too, how he forsook all things of state to consort with things uncanny, as they say. They say he didst read overmuch the parchments that were writ by those they say be sorcerers. Yet he was a holy man. None but thought him queer. Then, when he saith to the king, his brother, he wouldst be of greater

service away from His Majesty than with him, not e'en the king couldst fathom the riddle."

"Forsooth, Sir Miles, where heardest thou all this?" Sir John inquired, then added thoughtfully, "I didst hear something of these tales, but thought them not worth the mentioning. It soundeth too much like idle women's gossip."

"Now that this be recalled, I remember 'twas said he told the king ere many years wouldst pass the kingly head shouldst be in much danger, but someone near to the king wouldst thwart the plans of the enemies." Thus Sir Henry contributed to the matter under discussion. "'Twas said the king liked not to hear of these disturbing things."

The conversation at this point was broken off by the approach of the masked knight, who bade the three to follow him.

" 'Tis best we go alone, though we have an army to follow after us. We had best advance with caution, lest we hasten that which should be given more time."

Two days they rode; then they saw before them a beautiful little valley, which was green with the verdure of springtime. With greater care they rode into the vale, and paused not until they came to a copse that hid the further view from their eyes.

"We shall leave our steeds here," said the calm-voiced leader. "My man will hold them until our return. We must see how these knaves have their forces, and where be their leaders."

But a few paces brought them to where they could see the tents of those in command. They approached nearer. Now they could see a number of sentries walking about. Before this they had caught glimpses of other sentinels, but they had somehow passed by those without being themselves observed. Though he was some little distance from them, they easily recognized the burly figure of Sir Herley, who stood outside one of the tents gesticulating in his customary pompous fashion. Beyond, they saw an army of troopers standing with their horses, as if they were awaiting orders to mount.

While the four stood looking over the situation, a trooper on foot came up behind them and spoke to the masked knight in low tones.

"Thy man told me where to find thee. Thy orders are awaited."

"Say my orders are to surround the valley, and to await my signal."

"It shall be done, sir."

In an incredibly short time, soldiers had surrounded the vicinity; these the four could see from where they stood. The masked knight now bade his companions to await his return, and he started down the valley alone. A sentry stepped before him to bar the way. To the amazement of those who watched, the masked knight merely folded his arms and looked for a moment steadily at the man; and, with a look of terror on his face, the man fell back. Then the knight strode on until he was before Sir Herley.

"We meet once again, Sir Herley. It seemeth to me thou hast a variety of occupations."

"I care not what seemeth to thee, thou interloper! But now that thou art here, here thou shalt stay. I hadst not planned on such good fortune. Now thou art to pay dearly for thine interference. Ho, the guard! Seize this knave and prepare him for immediate execution."

Several troopers rushed to obey Sir Herley's command. Again the knight folded his arms, and looked at his would-be captors. He uttered not one word. With blanched faces they retreated almost as quickly as they had advanced.

"What aileth thee, thou scum of the gutters? Dost fear this man? Brave soldiers are ye indeed!"

By this time the whole camp was aroused, and all pressed forward to see what had caused the excitement. Then the masked knight began to speak.

"List ye all. Among ye are traitors to thy king and country. Those of another land are almost as despicable for using such traitors as their dupes. 'Twould be a duty to destroy thee without further warning, but it hath ever been the mind of the masked knight to be merciful. Ye are surrounded on every side by men brave and true; they will fight to the death in a just cause. There be no escape for ye, and we wouldst shun bloodshed if it be possible. If ye do not surrender, thou shalt never see another sun."

"Fie upon such insolence!" cried Sir Herley. "Upon him and bind him at once."

It was then the masked knight raised his hand above

his head. At once armed men appeared on every side and swarmed into the valley. At another signal from the knight, they halted before the enemy, who were now prepared to receive them. Thus the two armies stood facing each other.

Again the masked knight spoke: "Hark ye, my men. Make no advance till I give thee word." Then, turning to the others, he said, "Once again I wouldst save thee from harm. Lay down thine arms and swear fealty to thy king. As thou hast seen, our men number less than half thy number; yet these will fight till all are dead if they be bidden. I wouldst hinder this useless shedding of blood. Will ye surrender?"

Sir Herley roared an order. "Upon them, knaves! We waste no further parley with this braggart. Advance — and let not one escape."

The advance began, but the knight stood still with his arms folded. Thus he stood in his characteristic pose. His men also stood as if they awaited an order. The larger army was almost near enough for the men to hurl their lances at those who so calmly waited, when, suddenly, the masked knight unfolded his arms and pointed one finger. The pointing finger began at one end of the long line and continued past all, at about the level of the men's faces, until it had included the other end of the advancing column.

The sight which the three waiting knights saw held them as if they were frozen where they stood, for every man at whom the finger had pointed had stopped in his tracks as suddenly as if a wall had confronted him. Sir

Herley, seeing this, roared his orders to advance. But not a man moved. Wonderingly, the traitorous knight looked at his masked foe, who again stood with folded arms and calmly contemplated the burly leader.

"Sir Herley, again and again thou hast been warned. But thou hast not heeded. When I didst tell thee at the tournament I knew thee well, thou wert disconcerted, for thou wouldst not that any man shouldst know thy past. Through the force of circumstances, thou hast been placed in a position higher than thy merit. These circumstances hast thou created through thy treachery and deceit. None but I doth know how, upon the passing of the owner of Herley Castle, thou, but an adventurer, didst cause the death of his imbecile son, whom he hadst hidden away that the world might not know his condition. And thou didst take upon thyself the title, which thou hast most wantonly shamed. Not satisfied with thy treachery here, thou must needs carry it e'en to the country itself. But now thine end hath come. I wouldst have been spared the necessity of taking a single human life, but a Power, higher than I, hath designed differently. I give thee sufficient time to make thy peace with thy God, for within the hour thou, with thy followers, shalt be fit only for burial."

"So thou hast known my secret. I am to accompany my followers? Thou speakest as if they were already dead. If I see aright, they still be on their steeds, and those afoot still be on their feet. What thou hast done to them, I know not. But methinks they have been in league with thee, and hath played me a scurvy trick."

"Thou thinkest that? Approach them and find what thou art soon to be."

Sir Herley strode forward and touched the arm of the soldier nearest to him. To his horror he found the man was stiff in death. He was now fully convinced that he was confronted by an invincible foe, and the knowledge of his own guilt did not add to his peace of mind. He turned his surly countenance toward the masked knight.

"How hast thou done this?" he asked.

"The Power that hath accomplished this thing is unknown to thee, and thou hast brought it down upon thine own head by thy dishonesty and greed. Gladly wouldst I have been spared the necessity of being an instrument for the death of all these men and thyself, but it were better that all dishonest fellows die than that one honest man be killed. Therefore, the lesser evil hath taken its toll."

"And what is to be my fate?" The voice of the burly one trembled.

"Thou are to witness the burial of thy fellows. Thou shalt be dealt with later."

At a signal from their masked leader, the troopers dismounted, and, together with the infantry, laid down their arms and began to dig a deep trench with the tools they had brought for the purpose. When the trench had been dug to the proper depth, they approached their dead enemies, both the mounted ones and those on foot. It was a gruesome sight to see, as the men, stiff in death, were taken from astride horses that had

not moved since their riders had been stricken, and put into the excavation that had been prepared for them. Each time a body was taken down, the horse would shake itself as if with great relief. And it was not a pleasant sight to see men standing upright moved away as statues might be removed from their pedestals.

Sir Herley was no longer the overbearing, roaring leader he once had been. He was now shaking as if with the palsy, from the horror of what he had seen, and of the sights he was still seeing.

When the men had all been buried, he turned his gaze toward the masked knight, whom he addressed in a hopeless tone. "It is entirely useless to ask for mercy."

"The matter hath passed from my hands. This thou couldst not understand, so 'tis useless for me to explain. Thou and thy followers have dared to defy a force unknown to thee, a force which may be used only by those who have the right to use it. This right is gained through proper conduct. From it there doth be no escape, once it hath begun its work. Thou, being of greater guilt than the others, must of necessity suffer the more. For this, thou hast been permitted to live that thou mayest see the result of thy handiwork."

The masked knight now ordered his men to mount and return to their quarters. For a moment he looked with pitying eyes at the trembling figure before him; then he strode off to rejoin his three companions.

From where they stood they saw another sight they would carry with them in memory to their last hour on earth. The poor wretch who had been Sir Herley to

those who knew him, was seen to throw up his hands in an agony of despair. After this gesture had been made, he clutched at his throat as if some unseen power had caught him there. Shriek after shriek rent the air as he tried to wrestle with whatever it was that gripped him. After what seemed to the watchers a very long time, the writhing figure, now black of face, and in convulsions that took away every semblance of the man he once was, fell to the ground. Almost immediately a blinding flash of lighting tore through the air with a report that made the earth tremble, and struck the dying man, instantly burning him to a crisp. And the flickering light continued to play about that which had been a man until not even a small fragment remained.

Slowly the four knights now made their way to their horses. None had the desire to speak, and silence reigned among them until they were well on their way homeward.

When they had arrived at their quarters, the masked knight said, "Thou shalt refresh thyselves, and then join me in the reception room within the hour."

CHAPTER XVIII

The Masked Knight and the King

ERE AN HOUR had passed the three comrades silently entered the chamber where their leader awaited them. He bade them be seated.

"Sirs, one task that lay before us hath been accomplished. There be others that shall come from time to time. Ye art to speak of what ye have seen and heard to no man, except to the king himself. Ye shall go to the king's castle and apprize him of what hath occurred, and say ye to him the masked knight doth crave as a boon for whate'er service he hath rendered, that neither this recent occurrence, nor what hath led to it, shall be spoken of. The king is to be told only because 'twill serve to put him on his guard, for the invaders are likely to plot again, and the masked knight mayest not always be at hand to assist him. Go now, and other instructions wilt be given ye later."

The voice of the masked knight while he was imparting these directions, indicated an extreme sadness, such as usually would not be the portion of one who had emerged victorious from a great encounter.

The three knights bowed low and went from the presence of the one whose word was law to them now.

Then they made their way to the king's castle and begged for an audience on a matter of much importance. The audience being granted, they accurately described to the king what had occurred.

When they had finished, he exclaimed, "Be ye in thy senses? Or hast taken some brew and brought upon ye a horrible nightmare? But stay – couldst the three of ye have dreamed the same? This is a serious matter and must be looked into."

"But Sire, the masked knight hath begged as a boon for naught to be told of this."

"But how art we to know something hath not occurred to thee and upset thy minds?"

No sooner had this question been asked than a voice they all knew said, "Sire, if proof thou must have, I will give it."

Now, all the doors had been closed, as the knights had demanded of the king all privacy before they were willing to disclose the matter they claimed to be of vast importance to him and to the kingdom. Yet the masked knight stood before them.

"How didst thou enter here whilst the doors were closed?"

"Sire, to prove to thee these men speak the truth, this hath been done by me. More – thou shalt see for thyself the occurrence as if thou hast been present."

Almost immediately the king's eyes closed, and for a few moments he appeared to be in a profound slumber. Then with a start he opened his eyes and looked about him. He had in a few seconds been taken back to the

occurrence in which the others had played their parts, and he had seen the entire event as it had taken place. As if to brush away the sights he had seen, he passed his hand over his face.

"What sorcery is this? I have looked upon, as if in a dream, all ye have described. Yet never hadst I experienced a dream like this one. What meaneth it all?"

"Only this, Sire. Through the use of certain knowledge, which only few possess, thou hast been enabled to see what hath occurred. The masked knight is about to leave the things of this world forever, hence the necessity of giving thee a warning in time to prevent thine enemies from causing thee sorrow."

"But who art thou who hath done us this service? And what is thy interest, since thou refuseth all reward for so great a deed?"

"My interest lieth only in justice and the right. Further than this, I seek not. But my work here hath been finished. I go hence, never to return."

"'Tis strange, indeed. Thou seemeth to have strange powers. One thing more I wouldst ask of thee. Canst tell me aught of my brother, the Duke of York?"

"Why dost thou wish to know of him?"

"What a question! I didst love my brother, though he was of a queer sort."

The masked knight now approached the king until he was within arm's length. Then he slowly drew off his mask.

"My brother!" cried the king.

"The Duke of York!" exclaimed the others.

"Thou seest now who it is hath been called the masked knight."

"But thou hast said thou art going away. Why? Canst thou not stay with us now thou has returned?"

"Nay. I have said my work doth not be of this world henceforth, and for a time I must dwell apart from it. Farewell, my brother."

He turned his gaze upon the three knights. "Guard well thy king," he said. "See to it that no harm befalleth him. Ye have been given powers none other in his service canst boast. Keep thine eyes and ears open. I leave thee now."

Slowly the Duke of York went his way toward the door. But before he had opened it, he had ceased to be visible to those present. It seemed as if he had suddenly faded out, as a dream fades to an awakening consciousness. None ever saw the masked knight again.

As the masked knight disappeared from the vision of the king and the three knights, he felt himself drawn swiftly to the rim of a pleasant valley, where he became conscious of being no longer the masked knight, but Crane. Beside him was Nona looking at him curiously.

"You know all that has taken place this time?" he asked.

"Yes. The members of the Brotherhood know many things you are yet to learn."

"There must be reasons for my remembering these episodes of the past. But so far I can grasp nothing more tangible than the mere reviewing of them, much as one would see a variety of episodes depicted in serial form

on the motion picture screen. Can you not tell me exactly what the reasons are? And explain the possible or probable benefits to be derived from such reviewing?"

"It is ever thus with those who are able to glimpse the history of the past. To the sincere, those who wish self-advancement for the benefit of many, such glimpses come in order that certain memories may reveal the hidden purpose that weaves in and out of the entire fabric of the past, like a golden thread, and is destined ultimately to connect the past with the present in such a way that it will be most profitable. On the other hand, many things that are unprofitable are left forgotten; they are of no further use and have been discarded. Of course, it is understood the term 'forgotten' is meant in a relative way, for in truth nothing is really forgotten. However, as they are of no further use to the ego, no further attention is paid to many experiences or episodes."

"Can you tell me what force the masked knight used to annihilate his enemies?"

"There is really only *one force,* though it is used in many ways. Most people call it electricity, and scientists claim every manifested thing is the result of the activity of electricity. This name will do as well as any other for the present. However, this force is not merely electricity, as the term is now generally understood."

"How was he able to control electricity without the use of mechanical means?"

"The greatest power in the universe is the *power of thought.* All other modifications of energy are subser-

vient to the vibrations of thought. When one has become sufficiently powerful in controlling thought, there is nothing impossible to such a one."

"But such a power would be a danger to mankind, were it wielded by an unprincipled person."

"True. But none may acquire this power until it is safe for him to do so. It is true some beings have learned to use laws which enable them to do some damage, but they can use them only to a certain extent."

"Was there no way for this knight to accomplish his purpose without destroying an entire army?"

"In this case the knight was only an instrument. These people had brought upon themselves what befell them through the law of compensation. He himself would have been glad could he have avoided such an ordeal, as you have seen, but the matter was in the hands of a still higher power. It was best that it happened as it did. The law ever works for the greatest good of the greatest number."

"How was the masked knight able to distinguish between his own reasoning or inclination and the dictates of this higher power of which you speak?"

"In the mind of the highly developed ego there is no doubt. One who has been given the power to use the mighty force the masked knight employed, has sufficiently evolved that he never makes a mistake in the use of it. He knows full well the responsibility such a power entails, as he also knows through subtle impressions that he receives what is to be done when occasion demands; and these impressions are infallible. They

are not subject to error, as are impressions received through the physical senses."

"How is it that few people, if any, can manipulate that force now?"

"More people are aware of and use this force than you may imagine. It is not best that the masses of mankind should even learn that what you have observed is possible. Electricity has been used in all ages, though it has not in all cases been called by that name. There are authentic records to show electricity has been used by the peoples of the Orient for thousands of years; and even the dry cell battery was not unknown to them. As you already know, there are other proofs, not physical, that electricity was once used by man generally, in more wonderful ways than he is using it today. Within a very few years the use of this force will surpass anything man has experienced during the present racial cycle."

"Thus far all the uses of electricity have been through mechanical means. Are we soon to see the results of its use through means *not mechanical?*"

"In places in the Orient today, certain tribes are able, through incantations and concentration, to produce thunder, lightning, and rain; or to cause a storm to cease in a manner that would put to shame any mechanical invention in use by so-called civilized man. This has been done for thousands of years, even before the time when Jesus is credited with having walked on the water and with having stilled the tempest."

"Yes, I have read all this," admitted Crane. "It is curious how much of these matters I already know, yet I find myself asking questions as if I knew nothing."

"It is an axiom that man already knows all, but that he does not *know* he knows. It constantly seems to be necessary for him to pass through experiences that reveal to him what he already knows. Nothing you have observed or have been told is new to you. Yet it has been necessary for you to review certain things in order that you might be convinced of that which you knew."

"That, too, I know, but had you not mentioned it, I might not have thought of it in that light. Again referring to these glimpses of the past, I find people whom posterity have called great seem to have possessed qualities or characters on a par with the ordinary individual. In other words, those people were not so truly great as they appeared to be, to their contemporaries or to those who came after them. The workings of their minds, their vanities, and idiosyncracies were about the same as those of others. This has come to me as something like a shock, for it has taken away much I have held more or less dear, with respect to some of those personages."

"This is one of the reasons why you have not been permitted to remember all things of the past, as is the case with your contemporaries. The greatest shock to humanity would be for man to learn that all the great characters in history were not greater in reality than anyone else. As a matter of fact, *the greatest characters are not mentioned in history,* with but few exceptions.

All the veneer that has been placed around those who were and are considered great in this world, will some day fall away, and we shall be enabled to see them as they really were. Should any person dare to speak the truth of some of these, such a one would be mobbed by the multitude."

Would not such a revelation be a calamity?" queried Crane. "Do not the examples a people have set up for themselves, at least in their hearts, serve a good purpose? Is this not better than to have such examples taken away, and thus to have taken away the incentive for emulation?"

"It does seem such would be the case, but a little meditation should soon show the superiority of dealing exclusively with the *truth.* Beautiful garments woven by man's imagination often hide the stern realities beneath."

"Then man as a whole is destined to know all these things."

"Let us return to the workshop for a moment, and this important question shall be the better answered."

When the two returned they found the workshop deserted, as the others had temporarily left for another part of the building. Nona stopped before a device that looked something like either a refrigerator or a radio receiving set. At least this was Crane's idea of its appearance. The girl pushed in a convenient switch, and a slight whirring sound indicated an energy had been brought into activity.

There were two cords, to each of which was attached a head-piece something like that worn by telephone operators. One of these was placed over Crane's ears; the other, over his eyes. Then Nona commanded him to select anyone whom he had admired as being great in history. Crane selected a character whom he had admired more than any other. Immediately the entire life of that character passed before him, including the nature of the thoughts and moods and the ultimate results of these.

To say he was astonished by the very ordinary nature of his findings is to put it very mildly. In the subject he had chosen he found only one or two qualities that had served to help that one on to so-called greatness. These were the *strength of will* and the *tendency to lead*. All the rest of what had made up the atmosphere of the personality was as commonplace as what would go into the composition of any common laborer.

CHAPTER XIX

The Truth of the Past

NONA HAD KNOWN whom he was to examine, and had turned two dials to their proper places in order that he might contact his subject. He now indicated he wished to take up another. She pointed to the dials and showed him how to adjust them to any number of years of the past he might care to invade.

When the first dial was set to the period in the past he wished to review, it was necessary only to set the other dial to correspond with the particular part of the world in which the subject had lived. In this way the subject could easily be recognized, and from then on it was only a process of keeping the attention on the subject.

After examining a number of famous characters in this way, and even the most secret thoughts of the subjects were revealed in a startling manner, Crane took off the head-pieces and said he had seen enough.

"You said this awakening will be a shock to the world." His voice sounded grim. "It will, indeed. I can conceive of no shock more rude. Just how will this be of benefit?"

"In the first place, all things will be revealed in their true light. Nothing whatever can remain hidden from any who look or listen. All hypocrisy will cease, as will all destructive thinking of every nature. Immorality and vice will fall away as if by magic, for man will be forced to right conduct in very self defense. Then truly anything of a destructive nature in which he may indulge will be destructive *only to himself*. This truth, of course, we already know, although it is as yet more or less abstract to the majority of mankind. When man has learned to read the past and the present, as you have done with the aid of this device, the abstract will have become a very stern reality."

"But all will not have the means of using a device like this," objected Crane. "Many people would never have such an opportunity."

"These devices, in a modified form, will be used much more prodigiously than are the devices for producing the motion pictures, now so much in vogue. After a few generations it will be possible to produce at will, through the act of mind alone, all the effects now produced by mechanical means. A time will come when all things mechanical will be replaced by the *power of mind alone*. This is according to law and according to the prophecies. Man has been placed here to conquer a physical world. He will do all that can be done with things physical.

"Now, *mind* is also becoming a subject of great interest – as much so as are things of a physical nature. A little meditation, and what the results will be anyone can readily see. As the study and use of the force we

call electricity is only in its infancy, so the study of the mind of man and its relation to the Divine Mind is yet in its swaddling clothes. When the time arrives that will compel man, through his own evolution and inventiveness, to lay aside the shams of hypocrisy, and to become the true and sincere being he was meant to be, then, indeed, will he have conquered the world of physical substance. He will then be ready for another world, into which he will swing with all the experiences of earth digested and assimilated, that he may continue unhindered upon the spiral path of progress."

"This is the most astounding thing I have experienced since I came here. I feel almost as I did when I found there is no Santa Claus. The people I have endeavored to pattern myself after really never existed. But I am now beginning to understand the reality of the situation. These people were great only in the eyes of the material minded. Only those who have striven to develop themselves and who have discarded all wordly honors and riches for that purpose, are truly great. Of course, I have known this in a vague way, but now the knowledge is so definite it is overwhelming."

"There will be many other things as marvelous as this. For instance, it will be possible to mingle with people, and to hear their speech, of thousands of years ago."

"Yes, I can readily see, judging by what I have already observed, this is to come. It is awe-inspiring to feel we may some day hear the words the wise men and prophets uttered in the past, in much the same way we can now hear, by means of a phonograph record,

the voice of a singer or speaker, though he may have been dead many years. Is the process we now call television a forerunner of this ability to look into the truth of the past?"

"Television, as it is now called, is only the first step in the truly remarkable use of the powerful vibratory waves that are all about us. When those further necessary steps have been taken, it is then the masses will know that which only a few have known for a long time, and which some only dimly guess, the truth regarding the history of the human race and the earth whereon man dwells. Not only this, he will also know the true nature and history of the other planets which are nearest him, and, as his capacity for knowledge increases, he will also know much concerning even those planets which are afar off. Much that is now theory will be proved to be truth, and much will be discarded as untrue."

"But will this same force that is destined to shed so much light, and to contribute so much to the advancement of the race, be the same force that enabled the masked knight to destroy Sir Herley without leaving a trace of what the traitorous knight once was?"

"Yes. The same force, but used in a different way."

"Will there ever come a time when certain individuals will strive to use this force for their own selfish interests, and thus attract to the earth the unavoidable calamities such a course would bring?"

"From this time on, and for some time to come, humanity will realize the uselessness of selfishness to a greater

and greater degree, until on this planet there will be established an earthly paradise. When the cycle is ended in which this shall occur, other things will happen of which it is best not to speak now."

"At the present time we have heard of the so-called death-ray. Is this ray caused by the same force that the masked knight used?"

"Yes. However, it should be added there is in reality *only one force*. It is used in different ways, as you have before observed."

"Was it the unconscious use of this force that brought upon the earth the calamities which destroyed the continents, Lemuria and Atlantis?"

"It is possible man collectively, through the nature of his thought vibrations, may send forth that which will attract to the land in which he lives the positive quality of these negative vibrations, to the extent that much of a destructive nature may occur in that land. This is not confined to the sinking of continents. Wars, floods, storms, tidal waves, earthquakes, and volcanoes, may come into activity in certain localities by means of destructive thinking. It is even possible to destroy what we know as the earth through such means. In other words, it is possible that through the very power he could use for constructive purposes, man might draw unto himself that same force in a way that would destroy him."

"It is strange someone has not made a discovery of this nature before," commented Crane.

"But that is not true. There have been many important discoveries and inventions that have not been brought

into universal use, for the reason that certain large corporations have bought them and laid them aside. They felt they would be injured, financially, should such things come to light."

"Then what is the remedy for such an evil? How may we ever use this wonderful power, even if it has been discovered, and ways have been invented to use it?"

"It cannot be held in obscurity forever. In the future someone will come forward who cannot be bought, or frightened into the relinquishment of his discovery or invention, except for the benefit of all humanity. Much is to be seen in this regard in the very near future. – Now let us again start on our way. It was necessary that you return here for the purpose of better understanding the things you have witnessed. This has been accomplished, and other fields of knowledge are to be explored."

Again the two went down the spiral stairway, then to the valley. When they arrived at the spot where they had sat, they stopped for a time. Crane looked long at the spot where he had been when he had again experienced the past. What a world of knowledge had come to him since he had left the outer world!

At last they turned their footsteps from the valley, and started back in the direction of the Brotherhood. Overhead an eagle soared so high it appeared to be little more than a speck. As Crane looked up, he felt an intense desire to possess the power that could command the bird to descend – a power he knew the other members of the Brotherhood possessed. While the desire continued in his mind, the speck suddenly grew larger and, like a

falling arrow, the great bird approached, until it became necessary for it to use its wings in order to nullify the terrific momentum. It finally alighted in a small tree near where he had stopped to watch. When he approached the tree, the great bird put out its head as if to be caressed.

"It looks as if your desire were granted more quickly than you expected."

"It was uncanny, but somehow I had a half conscious impression it would happen."

"Of course you had. Otherwise it could not have occurred. You knew all the time you could call him down, but it is only now the complete realization has come to you."

"Tell me this. According to events I witnessed, in my excursions into my past, I have manipulated wonderful powers. Why has it come about I have lost the ability, and shall have to again acquire it?"

"You have mis-stated the situation," Nona corrected him in her soft, gentle voice. "You have not lost the ability to use the power. You have not yet remembered the knowledge you have. Your development is comparable to that of a race, as has been explained to you. Each civilization reaches and passes the heights attained by a previous civilization. Likewise, the individual, with each earthly existence, providing no conditions have been set up to prevent his doing so, surpasses the development he attained in a previous life. Of course, his own past conduct has created whatever condition may confront

him. All things in the universe work according to this law of cycles."

"Then all I *have* done I may do now?"

"Yes, and much more. The knowledge, and the confidence that it is possible to you, are all you require. Mere belief will not do. There must be a knowing beyond believing. You must have the realization of its being true."

By this time the two had reached the natural enclosure which shielded the little valley from profane eyes. Entering by way of the exit through which they had left, they were soon within the domains of the Brotherhood.

For some months Crane continued in the pleasant task of receiving instructions from the Brotherhood. There is not the time nor the space in which to record much of what occurred during this time. As his latent faculties of memory began more and more rapidly to awaken, he became conscious of feelings very strange to him. He felt he was the possessor of powers he did not fully comprehend. More and more he approached the ability of those about him. He found he could, by merely wishing, bring to him anything he desired. There was only one exception.

Although he was very happy, there were times when he felt something must yet be added to make his happiness complete. Longings, unutterable and sad, at moments caused him to forget all else. This mood invariably came upon him when he thought of the beautiful being whose presence seemed a necessity, and whose absence left a void in him no one and nothing else could fill. He

found this mood was growing upon him, and, though he welcomed it at times, he occasionally felt he must ward it off, lest he would entirely lose his self-control.

Now he would firmly resolve to banish whatever thoughts came to him about the past; now he would give them full sway and again recall the exquisite, golden moments he once had lived. Such sublime moments may be lived only by those who truly love. These sweet memories, together with the sadness they invariably brought, were working, unperceived by him, subtle changes in his character. So clearly were these changes manifested none who looked upon his face could help seeing the greater softness and tenderness of the expression, which replaced the look of the alert business man who must keep his wits about him to hold his own among his fellows. At the same time about him was an air of majesty and strength that seemed to proclaim him a superior being.

Again and again he thought he could perceive a look of awe in the eyes of those who regarded him. This still puzzled him, but he did not think of trying to learn its cause. He knew the knowledge would come some time, and let it pass as he had let pass much for which he could not account.

He saw Nona only occasionally. Evidently her task of showing him about and instructing him in minor matters had been finished. When not engaged in the pursuits followed by all the members of the Brotherhood, he went about alone. Often he missed Nona because of questions he would have liked to ask, but he found, he nearly always answered himself immediately after a

question came to his mind. Most of the time he was glad to be alone. It seemed necessary for him to have much time to himself, that he might assimilate the marvelous knowledge he was privileged to glean in this stronghold of the Brotherhood.

Spring and summer had come and gone. It was now mid-October. The cool autumn breezes carried a tang to proclaim the coming of a glorious Indian summer's day. Crane, on one of his solitary rambles, thought nowhere else in the world could this time of the year be as enjoyable as within the foothills of beautiful Mount Shasta. The gently falling leaves, some a golden yellow, others a mixture of various shades of purple, foretold that soon the trees would bend their leafless boughs to the winter winds. Chattering squirrels were busily gathering leaves and moss with which to supply their larders during the colder months to come. Now and then a bear would be seen, and Crane would think it probably was looking for a place suitable for its long sleep. Overhead could be heard the honk of wild geese as they winged their way southward to warmer climes.

The huge boulder upon which Crane sat had, a long time ago, been thrown from the mouth of a volcano. Content to relax and let his thoughts roam where they would, he sat without moving. Suddenly he opened his eyes. He knew he had been asleep. Perched upon his knee was a squirrel, and it seemed to be trying to attract his attention.

"Well, old fellow," he said aloud, "what do you want?"

At once he received the impression to move. Under

one leg was a nut the squirrel had dropped and which had rolled down so the little creature could not get it. No sooner had Crane moved than the reddish-brown rodent pounced upon his nut and took it away, stopping only to look rather curiously at the huge being who had hindered and then helped him in his work.

Amused by the incident, Crane laughed heartily. Then he arose and commenced gathering nuts and seeds of the kinds he had seen the squirrels gathering; and when he had filled his coat pockets until they bulged, he emptied his harvest on the ground at the root of the tree in which the squirrels had their nest. With a gesture, as if they were to know what he meant, he told them to help themselves. And they immediately began to carry the nuts up in great haste. Though they were too busy to do more than chatter a little as they hurried up and down the tree, it seemed to him he could sense their gratitude. Nor did they seem to mind it in the least when he knelt on the ground to watch them more closely. Their instinct, he thought, informed them he was a friend.

At last he arose and walked on through the thick woods. Becoming engrossed in his musings, he ceased to heed his surroundings. How long he had walked thus he had no idea, when he discovered he was going down hill on a winding path, which, he recognized, must have been in use a long time, for it was somewhat lower than the level of the land on both sides, as if it had been worn down by many feet. Just when he had entered it, he did not know, but he was sure he had been further

afield before he had become lost in his thoughts than the members of the Brotherhood were wont to travel from their headquarters.

With his curiosity aroused, he continued on the path until, after a couple of hours, he found himself overlooking a valley. He saw this valley was larger than the one occupied by the Brotherhood, and that there were more and larger houses. As he stood staring at the scene in surprise, he did not note the approach of a man who came toward him by way of another path that crossed his own.

The rustling of a twig caused Crane to look up, and his gaze encountered a stranger to him, a man who was tall and straight, and whose countenance bespoke friendliness to all the world.

"You are welcome, Donald Crane," said a voice at once rich and mellow.

"I beg your pardon. I shall not ask you how you know my name, but what place is this, and who are you?"

"With regard to your first question, this is another stronghold of the Brotherhood, and, though the members here more or less frequently visit the headquarters you have left, there is a slight distinction. As for the latter question, it does not matter."

"You mean this is another branch of the Brotherhood?"

"It may be put that way."

"I had not known this. It is strange no one has mentioned it to me before."

The good man smiled. "It was not to be mentioned. You were to find it when the time was ripe. This is but another step you have taken."

"You mean I have advanced in some way? I seem to get that impression now."

"Yes. It may be called an advancement, as you now know something you did not know before, or, to put it more correctly, something you did not remember."

"What? Have I known this place before?"

"Come with me. You shall tarry here a while. You are most welcome."

Soon they were within a building similar to the one he had entered when Nona had led him to the quarters of the Brotherhood, though it was more ample and the furnishings were different. Several people of both sexes were seated in the place, as if a meeting were being held. When Crane and his escort entered, all arose, including the dignified personage who presided.

He who had acted in the capacity of escort, said, "Most Worthy Master, Brothers and Sisters, I have the honor to present him whom you have been awaiting."

The Master bowed and said, "You, who are still known as Donald Crane, are welcome. Long have we awaited your coming, and this day has filled us all with joy."

The respect and reverence in the speaker's tone and manner moved Crane profoundly. Emotions he could not have described swept through him. Somehow he felt he was entitled to the attentions shown him, but for the life of him he could not understand why.

Crane found himself saying, "My good people, I thank you. It is good to be so well received. Though there are yet some things to understand, there is the feeling that all is well. Please be seated."

In the faces of all who were present he saw the look of awe he had become accustomed to seeing in the faces of those of the other valley. They bowed and took their seats, but not before he himself had been seated. Again a feeling of great power surged within him. He felt he had a right to be wherever he might find himself. Yet there was something elusive in his consciousness, something that seemed a part of him, but which would not come to light so he might view and analyze it. Well, he would let it pass for the time being. In the meantime, he must learn what was to be learned with these people who had dealt with him so kindly. Somehow he loved them as if he had known them always. There was a feeling of real kinship.

Here the meals were served in the identical manner they were in the other valley. Also the habits and customs of those who lived here were much the same. Now he understood why the observatory and the workshops were so far away from the first valley he had found. They were meant to be accessible to both branches of the Brotherhood. Immediately came the thought such accessibility was not necessary. Could not any member at will at any time be where he wished? While he was musing over this and other things, the Master arose and said, as the purpose of the meeting had been served, all were at liberty to retire.

CHAPTER XX

The Lost Lemuria

No words could describe the ineffable ecstasy that surged through him while he listened to the evening lecture on philosophy and science. So profound and logical was the explanation of why man was forced to use his reasoning ability in his conquest of matter, before it was given him to attain his desires through other means than matter, he marveled at the understanding of the speaker. He not only was thrilled to know the limitless power man has within him, but also was dazed to learn of the many uses of the power. The entire discourse held him like one entranced. It made him appreciate more than he ever had before the rare privilege it was to be one of the present race, and he felt as if great waves of love were going out from him to all living creatures.

All too soon it ended, and he was shown to the room assigned him. He saw the chamber was somewhat larger, and there were a few more rugs on the floor; otherwise the furnishings and arrangement of things were about the same as in his room in the other valley. The same soft light that came from no visible source, pervaded the room until he had retired, when it slowly faded out.

An impression came to him that his stay here would not be long. Nor was he to return to the valley he had left. Where he was destined to go he did not know, but his conviction was, wherever his path might lead him, he would be happy.

His awakening next morning was pleasant. A fresh autumn breeze fanned his brow. He lay in bed with a luxurious sense of enjoyment. His first autumn with the Brotherhood! Not once since his arrival had he wished himself elsewhere. How many times had he blessed the book which had sent him on his quest! But now there was something different in the air. The feeling was hard to define. With the joyousness of the present was an intangible promise for the future. Altogether his feeling was a supremely delightful one to be experiencing.

Finally he arose, bathed and dressed himself. He stood before a wide-open window, breathing in the uncontaminated air, and turned a friendly gaze on the sun as it began to show itself over the mountain tops. Long his eyes feasted upon the beautiful panorama before him, until, overcome with a sense of reverence and love for all the universe, he fell upon his knees beside his bed and thanked the Supreme Creator of all things visible and invisible for the great joy that was his.

When he had arisen to an erect position, he turned and saw standing in the center of a great golden light, the Master who had before appeared to him.

"My son, your conduct and your thoughts are bringing you their legitimate and natural results. Your love for all life, during your many existences, has brought

you more closely in tune with Him whom you have just reverenced. It is a joyous thing to be a holy man."

"I had thought that, with the exception of only one thing more, I could not feel a greater pleasure. But your coming has shown me differently. You, my Guide and Master, I also thank for all the good that has come to me. I would that the entire world could feel such happiness! I would that I could share my own with others less fortunate. Yet, beloved Master, may I ask just one question regarding the only thing that could make my happiness complete?"

"Your question is known, my son. Be of good cheer."

"Then I shall see her soon? I feel I shall, Master. But it is difficult to wait. Is it wrong to hold the desire to be once more united with her, who has been and is now a part of me?"

"The desire for individual possession has deterred many from the attainment of full happiness, for, in the eternal scheme of things, it is written all are One, and that he who pursues any other course must sooner or later give up that which he most cherishes. This does not apply altogether in your case, for more than once you have demonstrated your ability to forego personal pleasure that your fellow creatures might be served. No, it is not wrong. Furthermore, your greatest work yet lies before you, and it may be the better carried on by you when she, whom you regard, who really is your other half, is again united with you. The trials of separation have really not been very harsh, yet they have served the purpose of bringing your consciousness more in tune with

the reality of all that is. The experiences were necessary to prepare you for the better understanding of that which you are to know and do. Patience for a little while. She awaits you with the same anxiety with which you wait for her. The antelope is again to come into your life. When it does come, follow where it leads. Peace be with you."

In a moment the Master had disappeared, together with the light that had surrounded him. Again came a wondrous feeling of ecstasy. It was almost too intoxicating to endure. But it was not the emotion he had known in times past when he was with her whom he loved. It was deeper, finer, more sublime, as if it were a part of Heaven itself.

At the breakfast table it seemed to Crane the decorum of those present was different than it had been at the evening meal the day before. He saw it was expected of him to seat himself before any of the others would be seated. When the meal was over, all appeared to take it for granted he was to do as he desired, and, though no word was spoken, he knew some waited to serve him in whatever he might wish to do.

To one of the waiting Brothers, he said, "Will you keep me company? I should like to take a walk, and would have someone with whom to converse."

"With pleasure."

"Then let us proceed. There is an interesting mountain in the distance that attracts me. I should like to look it over."

"That is a very interesting mountain. It is the peak of a once active volcano. Its surroundings will show you this is true."

While it was quite a distance to their objective, within a short time the two found themselves at the foot of the great peak. They sat upon a great boulder the better to enjoy the view below. Presently Crane forgot he was not alone, and began to muse upon the awful havoc this monster when in action must have wrought. How long ago could it have been? Was the place then inhabited? Had all life been extinguished in a moment? How he would like now to have access to the device in the workshop that he might look into the past of this mighty upheaval.

Instantly the mountain disappeared. In its stead were level lands, green with grass and other vegetation. He saw men and animals, and all evidence of a peaceful happy age. Again the scene changed. He saw the land more thickly populated; where once had been villages, now there were cities; and the people were more advanced in the scale of civilization. There were castles, and mechanical devices for the performing of work which before had been done by the strength and toil of man. The people were more prosperous than the simple folk he had at first seen, and everyone appeared to be happy and contented.

Then came another change. This time the area, according to the outward appearance, had advanced far beyond the others. There were larger castles. The population had enormously increased. Some of the people were

very wealthy, some were very poor, but there seemed to be scarcely any contentment. The wealthy were idle. It could be seen vice reigned supreme. The poor hated the rich, and the rich despised the poor. Greed, hatred, and immorality everywhere prevailed.

Crane felt a curiosity to know how far this land extended. At once he saw it continued for a great distance—into what, at the present time, was the Pacific ocean. He saw it reached nearly across the great body of water. Only an instant he wondered over the situation. He became definitely sure he was on a part of the continent of ancient Lemuria; also he knew people in general, and even scientists, of today had no authentic information concerning that lost land; all they had was fragmentary legends. He saw that, in that period of the past he was surveying, the land which now reached from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic had not yet heaved up into the light of the sun.

All this came before him as his thoughts sought out each hidden cause, to give him answer to that which he desired to know. But what had happened? Then he saw a certain few exhorting the others to mend their evil ways. The thoughtless and the wrong-doers were told it behooved them to make preparation for the worst. All but a small number were prone to scoff and laugh at the ones who sacrificed their time and labor in a humanitarian task. Then all at once from many portions of that unhappy land fire belched forth and volcanoes roared in fury, until great cavities were formed, which later were filled with water. Only the few inhabitants who

had listened to those who had preached, and who had gone eastward, were able to save themselves from this awful baptism of fire.

As the ill-starred land went down, land arose to the east and to the south, as if to take the place of that which for a time would rest beneath the waves of the great Pacific ocean. The waters of the Pacific still bathe the shores of what was left of the old Lemurian continent, and this remnant now forms the western coast line of another great continent.

With a sigh, Crane turned to his companion. "Of course, you, too, know the history of this land?"

"It is known to all members of the Brotherhood."

"Let us return. But I shall come again. Something seems to draw me here. Yes, I will come again."

The look of awe Crane saw pass over the face of his companion, gave him a curious feeling. He thought of how he had felt when he was a small boy, when he had sensed his elders knew things they did not see fit to communicate to one so young. The unexplained attitude of the members of the Brotherhood toward him, affected him similarly. Well, he should know about it sometime. For the present it could keep.

Soon after his advent into this second valley, he became aware, if a question arose in his mind, immediately the answer presented itself. His ability to answer things for himself surely had increased to a startling degree. At least it seemed so to him. Sometimes he found himself remembering events he had witnessed in some previous existence, as clearly as if they had taken place

during his present life. Revelation after revelation unfolded itself to his eager mind, which seemed never to be satiated.

One day he was reflecting on this eagerness of his to know things, wondering when he would become satisfied. He had been sitting near a bank of a little stream, which was fed by the mountain springs that were so numerous in the vicinity. A single thought interrupted his musings; and it caused him to rise from where he was seated in haste. Might it not be this eagerness of his was not conformable to the principles he was begining more fully to understand?

He knew this was true. He knew that as long as he was bound to the reasonings of the objective mind, something must of necessity be withheld from him. He must become free from all the usual emotions, before he could be entirely free. But how could this occur, when the one thing that was lacking to make his joy complete, absorbed his attention at times to the complete obliteration of all else? Was this not a human trait? Almost immediately the answer came. Yes, it was a human trait, but it was also a divine one. When it was lifted to the proper plane, it ceased to be a mortal attraction only. Now it was a call from an incompleted self for the other half that was essential to perfect harmony of being.

When he had finished his cogitations on so deep a subject, he became more calm, more filled with a sense of peace than ever he had felt before. Soon his cherished desire would be realized. Of this he was certain. Also he knew the sense of independence as to the thing desired

would bring about more rapidly the realization. He arose and went back to his quarters, and within him was the conviction that more had been accomplished during this brief time than had been during any other period of his stay with the Brotherhood.

The weeks now passed swiftly by. No longer was heard the honk of wild geese going southward. With the exception of those evergreens whose leaves were left unaffected by the icy winds and chilling snows, the trees were bare. The squirrels had retreated into their winter homes, to await the coming of spring before they would again venture into the light of day. But inside the valley the atmosphere was warm and comfortable, as if springtime were perpetual. One felt the intense cold only when one ventured outside that protected circle.

One day Crane started out on one of his solitary rambles. To have the wintry wind stinging his cheeks was at times what he wanted. In the path he chose the first few flakes of snow of the season were falling. This path led to the foot of the mountain where he had been able to push aside the veil that hid the past of the ancient Lemurian continent. Near the spot he had previously visited was a running brook. He sat for a moment to watch the water as it gurgled over and around the stones that lay in its path. The ground about him was now covered with a light blanket of whiteness, as the snow was falling faster and faster.

High above him the mountain peaks towered, ghostlike in their snowy covering. Entranced with the beauty and grandeur of it all, he sat until he himself was al-

most covered with the feathery flakes that fell upon him so noiselessly. The air was cold and almost still; not even a twig was seen to move; and the only sound that could be heard was that of the water in the brook as it rippled past. Crane lost himself in thought. He thought at length upon his past in this life; then he began to review what he remembered of his other experiences as he had glimpsed them. More began to come to him regarding those somewhat incomplete flashes, until he was able to supply much that had been left out. In other words, *he began to remember all,* instead of merely portions of his past. Hence, a great deal that had puzzled him, he now fully understood.

His revery was suddenly interrupted by the tinkle of a tiny bell. At first he was surprised to hear a sound of this kind in such a place. Then, just as suddenly, he knew the sound came from a bell suspended from the neck of an antelope. He *knew* before the graceful animal came within range of his vision.

No sooner did the animal see Crane than it bounded towards him, its bell tinkling merrily. It laid its muzzle in his extended hand, and looked up at him with liquid eyes.

"Well, old fellow," said Crane, "lead the way. I have been expecting you."

The antelope darted off, and he followed. The path led for some distance by the side of the little stream; then, abruptly leaving the brook, it wound around the mountainside. At last they stood upon a ledge from where Crane could look into the depths hundreds of feet below.

He was conscious of having seen all this before; and, as he wondered when and where, long stilled memories became active. He knew he had once lived on this part of the ancient continent.

While the greater portion of that vast land had been ravaged by fire and swallowed up, the narrow strip which composed a part of the coast line of California had been left unharmed, except for the terrific upheavals that had prevailed throughout the land. This part where he stood had not been submerged. The old landmarks were now as familiar to him as if, instead of ages ago, he had been there yesterday. What memories now came to him!

A short while before the catastrophe, he had been a king, restless and bored beyond endurance. In desperation he had left his kingdom and had gone in search of adventure and freedom from the fetters of his kingship. He recalled how he had fought the battles of another monarch, the meeting with his future queen, all came back clearly. It was as he had seen it in the vision he had had in the valley of the Brotherhood he had first found. The almost overwhelming emotions which took possession of him are impossible to depict. Slowly he walked behind the antelope, with his heart nearly bursting from the mingled joys and longings of an eternity.

Finding himself in darkness, he knew he was passing through a tunnel which led, it seemed, into the very heart of the mountain. They had proceeded a considerable distance when the light ahead told him he would soon be again in the light of day. Upon emerging from

the darkness, he was momentarily surprised to discover an atmosphere of spring instead of winter.

The antelope stopped to drink from a stream at his feet. The sight of the gurgling waters as they rippled past over the stones and boulders, affected him strangely. Again his heart almost ceased to beat, for he recognized it as the self-same stream at which he had found an antelope that had led him to the castle of the king, the uncle of the Princess Zuna, so long ago.

"God above!" he cried aloud, "Give me strength to bear what is near to take me from my reason!"

Such joy, such longing, such a terrific something that cannot be put into words, surged within him, he was in an almost unendurable state of emotion. But no sooner had he uttered his prayer than he became calm and more reposeful, though his feelings were none the less potent.

Again the antelope started away. Its tinkling bell reminded Crane it was exactly the same sound he had heard when he was in search of his loved one in that other age. As he walked along, he recognized the very terrace he had known before. Strange that it had not deteriorated as terraces are wont to do in time. Then he knew that as fast as a stone had fallen another had been put into its place; constant repair had kept the place from falling into ruins throughout many ages. Even the earthquakes and the terrible volcanic eruptions had not been allowed to cast it down, and it had never needed to be rebuilt as had all other things in the course of time. Some great power had seen fit to preserve all here in its original state.

At last he arrived at the gateway to which he had been led before. And the maid came out in response to the tinkling bell to let the antelope in. But this time she did not ask if the stranger wished to see someone in the castle. Instead she sank upon one knee, and said:

"My king, you are most welcome. I shall lead you to the queen's chamber."

Once again Crane called upon his Maker to assist him in maintaining his self-control, as he was led through the corridors he had known and loved before. In the anteroom to the queen's chamber, he paused, for he heard a silvery voice singing to the accompaniment of a sweet-toned stringed instrument. Enraptured he listened to the song before venturing further.

"I wait for thee, my love, I wait for thee,
Year on year, age on age, through all life's
storms and strife;
Waiting, wishing, longing, though it be
an eternity,
Until thou shalt come again into my life.

"The way hath been long, my love, but now
the time draws near,
When once more thou shalt be mine; we ne'er
shall part again;
All life's trials are left behind, and now
there's naught to fear,
For sorrows and pains are vanished as fades
the iris after rain.

"Long have we loved, dear one, though parted
many times,
But now the hour approaches when we shall
hold each other near,
And speak of joys and happiness of other
days and climes,
When we thought and talked together, with
none but us to hear.

"Thou art drawing nearer, my beloved, nearer
to this beating heart,
That hath so fondly loved thee, and awaited
thy return;
Again we shall embrace, my love, never more
to part;
For thee the lighted window-lamp hath never
ceased to burn.

"Pause no longer, my beloved, my Soul is
calling thee;
The longing years are naught, now that thou
art near;
Finished are thy travels, which have led
thee back to me;
For us there is no other time nor place, —
but just the now and here."

Pushing aside the great portiers, Crane saw the lovely form and face of the girl of his dreams. She was looking toward him expectantly, her bosom heaving and her lips

parted. He advanced a step, then found himself singing in response to the song he had just heard. Without effort the melody and the words came to him, as if he had rehearsed them many times.

"I have only paused, my loved one,
at the threshold of thy door,
To hear the song completed from
the sweetest voice e'er heard.
I come to thee with open arms,
to leave thee never more;
My heart is nearly bursting,
with what thy song bestirred.

"Haunting mem'ries, longing of
I knew not what at first;
Then strange awakenings, enticing
glimpses of the past;
Yearnings and sweetest pains,
that made the heart near burst;
The way hath been long and weary,
but I am with thee at the last.

"Our lessons have been learned, my love,
and our pilgrimage is o'er;
From this time on, our path is clear,
the light shall henceforth shine.
Our love is broader now, and we have
opened wide the door,
Through which others may be led, as
we have been, oh, love of mine!

"Ah, again I hold thee in my arms,
as in the days of yore,
Once more I look upon thy face,
the fairest ever seen;
The perfume of thy hair, thine eyes,
thy form as once before, –
Make of all a world of happiness,
where thou shalt always rule
as queen."

While he was singing, Crane slowly walked toward the maiden, until he stood before her. With the ending of the song, he put his hands upon her shoulders, while he looked at her long and tenderly, as if he would greedily satisfy the hunger in his heart by drinking in her beauty with his eyes. And she, too, gazed fondly upon him. Soul bared to soul, they advanced toward each other, until they were clasped in warm embrace.

Then, placing a kiss upon the beloved brow, Crane drew her to a divan, where they sat for a long time without uttering a word. Words were no longer necessary to these two. They communed in a far more sublime language than is used by ordinary mortals.

In this period of silence, Crane learned much he had formerly wished to know. From the books he had read, before his coming to the Brotherhood, he had gathered there came a time in the individual's development when he passed beyond the emotional stage – when he would no longer be subject to the love one has for one's mate.

He now knew the pure love of man for woman, or of woman for man, was in itself a part of the Universal Love, which he had thought contained nothing of that love between the sexes. He now knew that without it the love for all things could not be complete, and that from it was developed the higher type of love, which need never be cast aside except with regard to the physical. He knew that, even though one could transcend the physical love, that love still continued in a spiritual way, without in any way interfering with the spiritual expression of life. On the contrary, it added much that, without it, would be lacking.

The girl at his side knew all the thoughts that were passing through his mind; and he also knew all her thoughts. It was as if they were conversing aloud. Thus, question after question came up and was dispossed of with incredible speed.

He soon learned the first valley of the Brotherhood he had entered, was once the headquarters of Pronious, whom he had vanquished with his ingenuity while defending the kingdom of his neighbor; and he learned the second valley had been the site of his own kingdom. And now he was in the land of his queen. Here he and his queen had made their headquarters for ruling the three united kingdoms. At last he knew the reason for the looks of awe he had seen on the faces of the Brethren from the time of his entrance into the valley. His people had recognized him, and knew that after many long years he had come again to be united with them.

But times had changed. Man-made laws were no

longer necessary, because the Law of Love ruled in all things. In reality he was now no greater than his humblest subject. Yet there was a greatness, the combined greatness of ruler and subjects. All had mastered the lower aspects of their lives. Curiously, or so it would seem to one who did not understand, in the present existence he was to be the last of his people to become aware of matters as they really were. This was in compliance with the Great Law.

Now all their earthly pilgrimages were over, and only the spiritual could enter into these sacred domains. The Brethren would insist upon the old relation between them and their beloved sovereign being preserved, but this would only add to the reverence now prevalent among them for the things of the spirit. And to think they were now on hallowed ground, and at the same time in the very land where they had lived so long ago!

Now he understood why he had seen no children in these valleys; why no cemeteries were in evidence. There was no longer the necessity for constant change into new physical bodies; the present physical bodies were just as their owners would have them.

After the two newly united monarchs had finished for the moment their meditations, they arose and went out into the garden. The air was laden with the perfume of flowers they so well knew, though, from where they sat on the old stone seat, the same one they had occupied in those by-gone days, they could see the winter snows were falling on the peaks around them.

As if caressing old friends, Crane's bare hands ran lovingly over the stones.

"And now it seems we are to take back our old names," he said, speaking aloud. "You are Zuna and I am Aloysius. Could this be told to the outer world, what a storm of disbelief would arise."

"But it shall be told, and many will believe. Many will know."

"Yes, of course, and many will come to us to enjoy this great happiness with us."

Thus the two sovereigns talked for hours, reviewing the past and discussing the future with intense interest, although for them the past, the present, and the future were merged into one. At last, as the evening shadows began to lengthen, they arose and passed into the castle. Advanced as he was, Aloysius, as he shall be called from this time on, was filled with overwhelming emotions when he passed through the portals and halls he had known so many years ago. The indescribable love for every stone and beam, aroused by memories of the past, together with the meeting with old friends long absent – which was his inner sense regarding all these familiar things, as he caressed them with hand and eyes – made the old castle a place of sacredness to him. His feelings were such as no ordinary mortal could altogether understand.

Zuna excused herself and went into her boudoir, while Aloysius continued down the great hallway toward the throne room. There he looked long and lovingly at the two thrones, which seemed not to have changed one

whit in all those years. Long he thought of the times in the past when the immense throne room had been filled with courtiers and the nobility from his own and other lands.

Instead of sensing a longing or regret, such as would naturally envelop the average individual under a like condition, he felt an unutterable thankfulness because he was seeing the old surroundings under more perfect conditions. In those remote days, the future and fulfillment had been before him and his people; now that future had become the present, and never again would there be the necessity of undergoing the experiences of the flesh. It was strange how different was the consciousness that now pervaded this little world. Formerly, the average person of his kingdom had thought only of how to attain what would give happiness to himself; nor had the members of his own royal circle been any more altruistic. Now the prevalent consciousness was the desire to be of service to all; and this wish was not restricted to those who belonged to this kingdom, but extended to all persons and creatures everywhere. What a change would come, were this same universal consciousness to prevail over the earth!

"Aye, my son, this spirit of oneness shall prevail over the earth, even as you have mused," said a rich, mellow voice that seemed to come from all directions at once.

Looking up, Aloysius saw the Master in the midst of a shining light.

"Most Worthy Master, you are welcome. That you have had a great part in my present happiness, and in

that of my people, I, of course, know. But to express a thankfulness, such as I cannot but feel, is beyond one who still retains some of the human limitations."

"You know full well words no longer are necessary, and yet you speak them. You also know that, while you have a profound feeling of thankfulness, you were the co-creator of your own destiny, and of much of the others."

"True, beloved Master, but the child still loves to prattle in the presence of his Superiors. And now that you have spoken, I know what you say is true, and that the new consciousness is fast spreading throughout all lands."

"Yes, my son, and the changes which must necessarily result from such a consciousness, are on their way, and coming rapidly. Soon there will be changes in the surface of the earth, changes in forms of government and in politics, changes in methods of commerce, in fact, changes in every line of endeavor. Many men are even now sensing that there is something in the air, though they know not what it is. Those who are more sensitive to non-physical influences, dimly guess. But those who have by persistent effort developed the Divine Powers within themselves are able to see that which is to occur. You, who have gathered here in the land of your ancestry, have not quite fully realized the important part you have played in the progress of the race. Always there have been, and must of necessity be, those who have led and prepared the way, and those who will continue this work, for the others who follow. Those who

lead sow the seed from which the harvest is to be gleaned.

"Though much has been accomplished, much remains to be done. There are those who even now are searching for the secret place of the Brotherhood, with the hope of identifying themselves with it. From time to time these seeking Souls shall find their way into the Brotherhood. Even as you have done. And, as they gather here in greater and greater numbers, you will find all have at some time been associated with you; that they belong to you, and you to them. By the time all these have been gathered together, you will find the power radiated from this land will have its proper effect. Thus, more swiftly, shall man enter into that state of perfection which is his rightful destiny. From this time on you will not be visited by those who have transcended the limitations of the flesh, for these shall be always with you, and you with them. Behold!"

The room was suddenly filled with a soft blue light, yet it was as brilliant as the noon-day sun. What followed could not be described in the language of men, even if it were permissible to write of it. We must, therefore, be content to say, space and time had ceased to be. The galaxy of stars and worlds and suns, and all that is, both the visible and the invisible, seemed to be present and at once, as if the reality of each had stepped out from its physical form and left it behind as an empty shell. More than this cannot be told.

Then once again all became as before, and Aloysius saw that Zuna was standing beside him. Not a word was uttered, for these two communed in a language far more

comprehensive than that employed by the mass of mankind. How wonderful it was to stand upon the brink of eternity and be able to look with clear vision into both past and future, and thus to blend them into the ever-present now!

Thus we leave the wonderful valley of the Brotherhood and those who dwell therein, as they await the coming of the few stragglers who are yet to seek admittance into the holy fraternity. When all have been gathered to the land of their forefathers, what then? Will the work of the Brotherhood be complete, or will it exist eternally, hidden away in the valleys amid the peaks of beautiful Mount Shasta, whose terrific activities of the past have served to protect the children of a forgotten continent? If the reader has found it possible to see the truths, hidden yet revealed, in these records, he shall have his answer. He may find these were written to spur him on to nobler heights, that he, too, may enter that sacred valley; for who can tell that all who read herewith are not also of that ancient kingdom, and some day destined to rejoin the Elder Brothers who have more quickly worked out their destinies?

Finis